

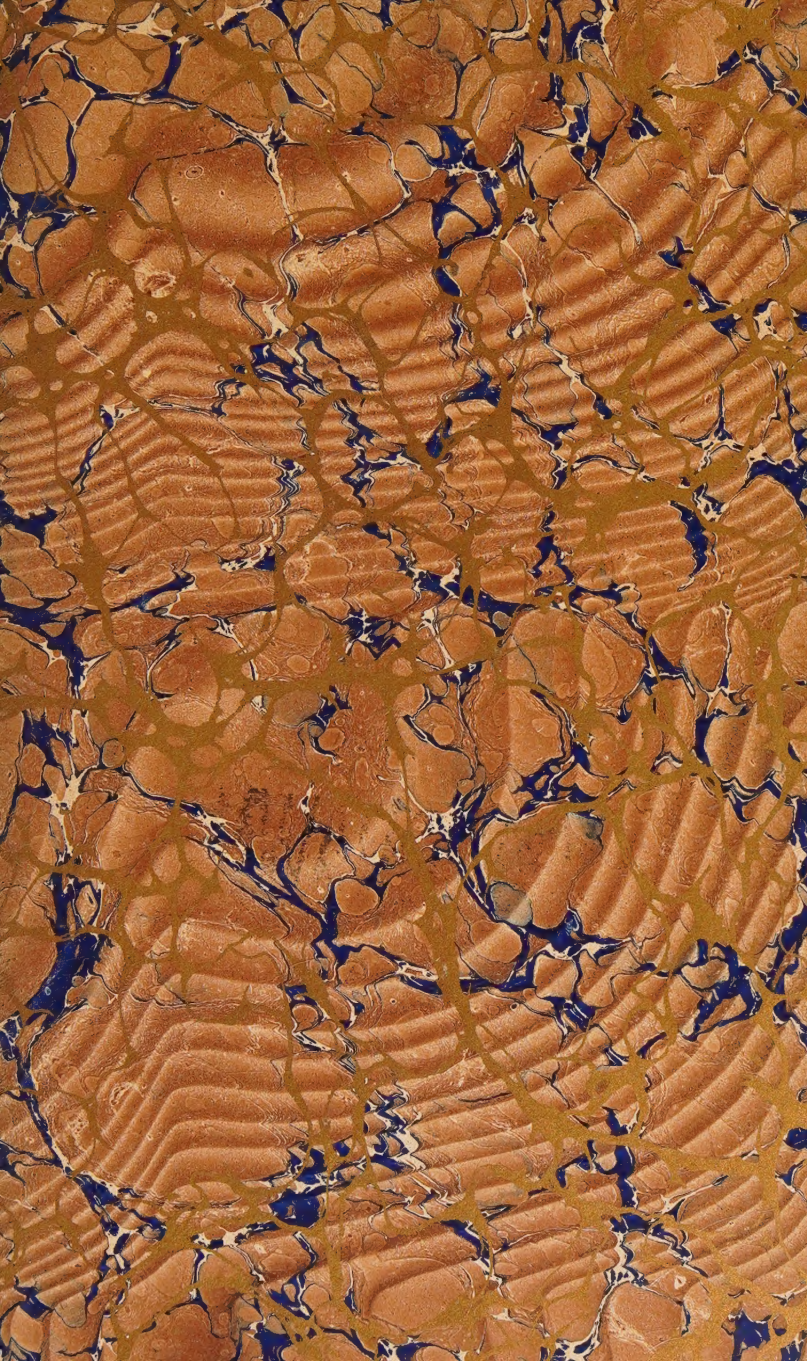




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THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
GEOFFREY CHAUCER

TO WHICH ARE APPENDED

POEMS ATTRIBUTED TO CHAUCER

EDITED BY

ARTHUR GILMAN, M. A.

*"O Master, pardon me, if yet in vain
Thou art my Master, and I fail to bring
Before men's eyes the image of the thing
My heart is filled with."*

WILLIAM MORRIS.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. III.



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THE HOUSE OF FAME.¹

FIRST BOOK.

Proem.

God turne us every dreme to goode !
For hyt is wonder, be the Roode,²
To my wytte, what causeth swevenes³
Eyther on morwes, or on evenes ;
And why theffecte folweth of somme,
And of somme hit shal never come ;
Why that is an avisioun,
And why this a revelacioun ;
Why this a dreme, why that a swevene,
And noght to every man lyche evene ; 10
Why this a fantome, why these oracles,
I not : but who-so of these meracles
The causes knoweth bet then I,
Devyne he ; for I certenly
Ne kan hem noght, ne never thinke
To besely my wytte to swinke,⁴

¹ Professor Bernhard Ten Brink, in his *Studien*, pp. 89-94, points out the suggestions that Chaucer derived for this poem from Dante, and says that the general plot is imitated from the *Divina Commedia*. The coincidences are indicated in the notes. A number of lines also resemble passages in Virgil's *Æneid* and in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

² Holy Rood ³ Visions. ⁴ Belabor.

To knowe of hir signiffaunce
 The gendres, neyther the distaunce
 Of tymes of hem, ne the causis,
 For-why this is more then that cause **is** ; **20**
 As yf folkys complexiouns ¹
 Make hem dreame of reflexiouns ;
 Or ellis thus, as other sayne,
 For to grete feblenesse of her brayne,
 By abstinence, or by sekenesse,
 Prisoun, stewe ² or grete distresse ;
 Or ellis by disordynaunce,
 Or naturell acostumaunce,
 That somme man is to curiouse
 In studie, or melancolyouse ; **30**
 Or thus, so inly ful of drede,
 That no man may hym bote **bede** ; ³
 Or ellis that devocioun
 Of somme, and contemplacioun,
 Causeth suche dreames ofte ;
 Or that the cruelle lyfe unsofte
 Whiche these ilke lovers leden,
 Oft hopen over moche or dreden,
 That purely here impressions
 Causeth hem avisions ; **40**
 Or yf that spiritis have the myght
 To make folke to dreame anyght ;
 Or yf the soule, of propre kynde, ⁴
 Be so parfit as men fynde,

¹ Temperaments or dispositions of the body. ² That is, confine-
 ment in prison or small apartment (*stewe*, closet). ³ Offer cure.
 Peculiar nature (*sui generis*)

That yt forwote ¹ that ys to come,
 And that hyt warneth al and some
 Of everyche of her aventures,
 Be avisions, or be figures,
 But that oure flessh ne hath no myght
 To understonde hyt aryght, 50
 For hyt is warned to derkly ;
 But why the cause is, nocht wote I.
 Wel worth ² of this thyngre grete clerkys,
 That trete of this, and other werkes ;
 For I of noon opinioun
 Nyl as now make mensyoun ;
 But oonly that the Holy Roode
 Turne us every dreme to goode ;
 For never sith that I was borne,
 Ne no man elles me beforne, 60
 Mette, I trowe stedfastly,
 So wonderful a dreme as I,
 The tenthe day now of Decembre ;
 The which, as I kan yow remembre,
 I wol yow telle everydele.

The Invocation.

But at my begynnynge, trusteth wele,
 I wol make invocacioun;
 With special devocioun
 Unto the god of slepe ³ anoon,

¹ Foreknows. ² Good befall (O. E. *weorihan*, to be, become) Somnus. This description is taken from Ovid, *Metamorphoses*,
 II. 592. Cf. *De the of Blaunche*, l. 137.

That dwelleth in a cave of stoon, 70
 Upon a streme that cometh fro Lete,
 That is a floode of helle unswete,
 Besyde a folke men clepeth Cymerie ;¹
 There slepeth ay this god unmerie,
 With his slepy thousande sones,
 That alwey for to slepe hir wone ² is ;
 That to this god that I of rede,
 Prey I, that he wolde me spede,
 My swevene for to telle aryght,
 Yf every dreame stonde in his myght ; 80
 And he that mover ys of alle
 That is and was, and ever shalle,
 So give hem joye that hyt here,
 Of alle that they dreame to-yere ;³
 And for to stonden al in grace
 Of her loves, or in what place
 That hem were levest for to stonde,
 And shelde hem fro poverte and shonde,⁴
 And fro unhappe and eche disese,
 And send hem alle that may hem plese, 90
 That take hit wele and skorne hit noghte,
 Ne hyt mysdeme in her thoght,
 Thorgh maliciouse entencioun.
 And who-so, thorgh presumpcioun,
 Or hate, or skorne, or thorgh envye,
 Dispite, or jape, or vilanye,
 Mysdeme hyt, pray I Jhesus God,
 That dreame he barefote, dreame he shod,

¹ Cymheria. ² Wont. ³ This year. ⁴ Ruin, disgrace.

That every harme, that any man
 Hath hadde syth the worlde began, 100
 Befalle him thereof, or he sterve,
 And graunt he mote hit ful deserve,
 Loo, with suche a conclusioun,
 As had of his avisioun
 Cresus, that was kynge of Lyde,
 That high upon a gebet dide.
 This prayer shal he have of me ;
 I am no bet in charitye.

Now herkeneth, as I have yow seyde,
 What that I met or I abreyde.¹ 110

The Dream.

Of Decembre the tenthe day,
 Whan hit was nyght, to slepe I lay,
 Ryght ther as I was wonte to done,
 And fille on slepe wonder sone,
 As he that wery was for-goo
 On pilgrymage myles two
 To the corseynt² Leonarde,
 To make lythe of that was harde.

But as I slepte, me mette I was
 Withyn a temple y-made of glas ; 120
 In whiche ther were moo ymages
 Of golde, stondynge in sondry stages,
 And moo ryche tabernacles,
 And with perre³ moo pynacles,

¹ Waked. ² Holy body, *i. e.*, saint (Fr. *corps saint*). ³ Stone.

And moo curiouse portreytures,
 And queynt maner of figures
 Of olde werke, then ¹ I sawgh ever.

But certeynly I nyste never
 Wher that I was, but wel wyste I,
 Hyt was of Venus redely,

130

This temple ; for in portreyture,
 I sawgh anoon ryght hir figure
 Naked fletyng² in a see.

And also on hir hede, *parde*,

Hir rose garlonde white and rede,
 And hir combe to kembe hyr hede,
 Hir dowves, and daun Cupido,
 Hir blynde sone, and Vulcano,
 That in his face was ful broune.

But as I romed up and doune,
 I fonde that on a walle ther was
 Thus writen on a table of brass :

140

“ I wol now say, gif that I kan,
 The armes, and also the man,
 That first came, thorgh his destanee,
 Fugityfe of Troy countree,
 In Itayle, with ful moche pyne,
 Unto the strondes of Labyne.” ³

And tho began the story anoon,
 As I shal telle yow echoon.

150

First sawgh I the destruccioun
 Of Troy, thorgh the Greke Synoun,⁴

¹ Than. ² Floating. ³ Lavinium. Cf. Virgil's *Aeneid*, i. 1
 Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 14,985.

With his false forswerynge,
 And his chere and his lesynge
 Made the hors broght into Troye,
 Thorgh which Troyens lost al her joye.

And aftir this was grave, allas !
 How Ilyoun assayled was
 And wonne, and kyng Priam y-slayne,
 And Polite his sone, certayne, 16c
 Dispitously of daun Pirrus.

And next that sawgh I how Venus,
 Whan that she sawgh the castel brende,
 Doune fro the hevene gan descende,
 And bad hir sone Eneas flee ;
 And how he fled, and how that he
 Escaped was from al the pres,
 And tooke his fader, Anchises,
 And bare hym on his bakke away,
 Crynge " Allas, and welaway ! " 17c
 The whiche Anchises in hys honde
 Bare the goddesse ¹ of the londe,
 'Thilke that unbrende were.

And I saugh next in al hys fere,
 How Creusa, daun Eneas wife,
 Which that he lovede as hys lyfe,
 And hir yonge sone Iulo ²
 And eke Askanius also,
 Fledde eke with drery chere,
 That hyt was pitee for to here ; 18c
 And in a forest as they wente,

¹ Deities. ² Iulus, called also Ascanius

At a turnynge of a wente,¹
 How Creusa was ylost, alas !
 That dede, not ² I how she was ;
 How he hir soughte, and how hir goste
 Bad hym to flee the Grekes oste,
 And seyde he most unto Itayle,
 As was hys destanye, *sauns faille*,
 That hyt was pitee for to here,
 When hir spirite gan appere,³
 The wordes that she to hym seyde,
 And for to kepe hir sone hym preyde.

190

Ther sawgh I grave eke how he,
 Hys fader eke, and his meynee,⁴
 With hys shippes gan to sayle
 Towardes the contree of Itaylle,
 And streight as that they myghte goo.

Ther saugh I the, crewel Juno,
 That art daun Jupiteres wife,
 That hast y-hated, al thy lyfe,
 Alle the Troyanysshe bloode,
 Renne and crye, as thou were woode,⁵
 On Eolus, the god of wyndes,
 To blowe oute of alle kyndes
 So lowde that he shulde drenche ⁶
 Lorde, lady, grome and wenche ⁷
 Of al the Troyan nacioun,
 Withoute any savacioun.

200

Ther saugh I suche tempeste aryse,

¹ Way. ² Dead, know not. ³ The shade of Creusa appeared to Æneas. ⁴ Household. ⁵ Mad. ⁶ Drown. ⁷ Man and woman or boy and girl

That every herte myght agryse,¹ 210
To see hyt peynted on the walle.

Ther saugh I graven eke withalle,
Venus, how ye, my lady dere,
Wepyng with ful woful chere,
Prayen Jupiter an hye²
To save and kepe that navye
Of the Troyan Eneas,
Sythe that he hir sone was.

Ther saugh I Joves Venus kysse,
And graunted of the tempest lysse. 220

Ther saugh I how the tempest stente,
And how with alle pyne he wente,
And prevely toke arryvage³
In the contree of Cartage ;
And on the morwe how that he
And a knyghte highte Achate,
Mette with Venus that day,
Goyng in a queynt array,
As she hadde ben an hunteresse,
With wynde blowyng upon hir tresse ;⁴ 230
How Eneas gan hym to pleyne,⁵
Whan that he knewe hir, of his peyne ;
And how his shippes dreynte were,
Or elles lost, he nyste where ;
How she gan hym comforte thoo,
And bad hym to Cartage goo,
And ther he shulde his folke fynde,
That in the see were lefte behynde.

¹ Shudder. ² Aloud. ³ Came to shore. ⁴ Cf. *Æneid*, l. 318
120. ⁵ Complain.

And, shortly of this thyng to pace,
She made Eneas so in grace 240
Of Dido, quene of that contree,
That, shortly for to telle, she
Became hys love, and lete hym doo
That that weddyng longeth¹ too.
What shulde I speke more queynte,
Or payne me my wordes peynte,
To speke of love? hyt wol not be ;
I kannot of that faculte.

And eke to telle the manere
How they aqueynteden in fere,² 250
Hyт were a longe processe to telle,
And over longe for yow to dwelle.

Ther sawgh I grave, how Eneas
Tolde Dido every caas,
That hym was tyd³ upon the see.

And aftir grave was how shee
Made of hym, shortly at oo worde,
Hyr lyfe, hir love, hir luste, hir lorde ;
And did hym al the reverence,
And leyde on hym alle dispence, 260
That any woman myghte do,
Wenyng hyt had al be so,
As he hir swore ; and herby demede
That he was good, for he suche semede.

Allas, what harme doth apparence,
Whan hit is fals in existence !

¹ Belongeth. ² Together. ³ Had happened him.

Fo1 he to hir a traytour was ;
Wherefore she slowe hir selfe, alas !

Loo, how a woman dothe amys,
To love hym that unknowe ys ! 270

For. be Cryste, lo thus yt fareth ;
" Hyt is not al golde that glareth."

For, al-so browke ¹ I wel myn hede,
Ther may be under godelyhede

Keivered many a shrewde ² vice ;

Therefore be no wyght so nyce, ³

To take a love oonly for chere,

Or for speche, or for frendly manere ;

For this shal every woman fynde,

That some man of his pure kynde ⁴ 280

Wol shewen outward the fairest,

Til he have caught that what him lest ;

And thanne wol he causes fynde,

And sweren how that she ys unkynde,

Or fals, or prevy double was.

Alle this sey I be Eneas

And Dido, and her nyce lest, ⁵

That loved al to sone a gest ;

Therefore I wol seye a proverbe,

That " he that fully knoweth therbe 290

May savely ley hyt to his ye ; "

Withoute drede, this ys no lye.

But let us speke of Eneas,

How he betrayed hir, alas !

And lefte hir ful unkyndely.

¹ Make useful. ² Wicked. ³ Foolish. ⁴ Very nature. ⁵ Foolish
ust. ⁶ But not if he does not know its nature.

So whan she saw al utterly,
 That he wolde hir of trouthe fayle,
 And wende fro hir to Itayle,
 She gan to wringe hir hondes two.
 "Allas!" quod she, "what me ys wo! 300
 Allas! is every man thus untrewē,
 That every yere wolde have a newe,
 Yf hit so longe tyme dure?
 Or elles three, peraventure?¹
 As thus: of oon he wolde have fame
 In magnyfyng of hys name;
 Another for frendshippe, seyth he;
 And yett ther shal the thridde be,
 That shal be take for delyte,
 Loo, or for synguler profite." 310

In suche wordes gan to pleyne
 Dydo of hir grete peyne,
 As me mette redely;
 None other auttour alegge I.²

"Allas!" quod she, "my swete herte,
 Have pitee on my sorwes smerte,
 And slee me not! goo noght away!"
 "O woful Dido, weleaway!"
 Quod she to hir selfe thoo.
 "O Eneas! what wol ye doo? 320
 O, that your love, ne your bonde,
 That ye han sworne with your ryght honde,
 Ne my crewel deth," quod she,

¹ A satirical Latin gloss here reads, "Beware, ye innocent women!" ² Virgil suggests these thoughts of Dido, but the expression of them here is Chaucer's.

" May holde yow stille here with me !
 O, haveth of my deth pitee !
 Ywys, my dere herte, ye
 Knownen ful wel that never yit,
 As fer-forth as ever I hadde wytte,
 Agylte¹ yowe in thoght ne dede.
 O, have ye men suche godelyhede² 330
 In speche, and never a dele of trouthe ?
 Allas, that ever hadde routhe
 Any woman on any man !
 Now see I wel, and telle kan,
 We wrechched wymmen konne noon arte ;
 For certeyne, for the more parte,
 Thus we be served everychone.
 How sore that ye men konne grone,
 Anoon as we have yow receyved,
 Certainly we ben deceyved ; 340
 For, though your love laste a sesoun,
 Wayte upon the conclusyoun,
 And eke how that ye determynen,
 And for the more part diffynen.
 " O, weleaway that I was borne !
 For thorgh yow is my name lorne,
 And al youre actes red and songe
 Over al thys londe, on every tonge.
 O wikke Fame ! for ther nys
 Nothyng so swifte, lo, as she is.³ 350
 O, sothe ys, every thyng ys wyste,

¹ Offended. ² Goodliness. ³ Lines 348, 349 are imitated from
 the *Æneid*, iv. 174

Though hit be kevered with the myste.¹
 Eke, though I myghte dure ever,
 'That I have do rekever I never,
 That I ne shal be seyde, alas,
 Y-shamed be thourgh Eneas,
 And that I shal thus juged be, —
 Loo, ryght as she hath done, now she
 Wol doo eftesones, hardely.²
 Thus seyth the peple prevely.”
 But that is do nis not to done ;
 For al hir compleynt ne al hir moone,
 Certeynly avayleth hir not a stre.³

360

And when she wiste sothely he
 Was forthe unto his shippes agoon,
 She into hir chambre wente anoon,
 And called on hir suster Anne,⁴
 And gan her to compleyne thanne ;
 And seyde, that she cause was,
 That she first lovede, alas,
 And thus counseyllid hir thertoo.
 But what ! when this was seyde and doo,
 She rofe⁵ hir selfe to the herte,
 And dyede thorgh the wounde smerte.
 But al the maner how she dyede,
 And al the wordes that she seyde,
 Who-so to knowe hit hath purpos,
 Rede Virgile in Eneydos,
 Or the Epistile of Ovyde,⁶

370

¹ Cf. Matt. x. 26. ² Certainly. ³ Straw. ⁴ Cf. *Æneid*, iv. 548
⁵ Stabbed ⁶ *Æneid*, end of book iv. : the *Heroides*, epistle vii.

What that she wrote or that she dyde ; 380
 And nor hyt were to longe tendyte,
 Be God, I wolde hyt here write.

But, weleaway ! the harme, the routhe,
 That hath betyd for suche untrouthe,
 As men may ofte in bokes rede,
 And al day se hyt yet in dede,
 That for to thynke hyt a tene¹ is.

Loo, Demophon, duke of Athenys,²
 How he forswore hym ful falsly,
 And trayied Phillis wikkidly, 390
 That kynges doghtre was of Trace,
 And falsly gan hys terme pace ;³
 And when she wiste that he was fals,
 She honge hir selfe ryght be the hals,⁴
 For he had doo hir suche untrouthe ;
 Loo ! was not this a woo and routhe ?

Eke lo how fals and reccheles
 Was to Breseyda Achilles,
 And Paris to Enone ;
 And Jason to Isiphile ; 400
 And eft Jason to Medea ;
 Ercules to Dyanira ;
 For he left her for Iole,
 That made hym cache his dethe, *parde*.

How fals eke was he. Theseus ;
 That, as the story telleth us,
 How he betrayed Adriane ;⁵

¹ Trouble. ² The following examples of untrue lovers are taken from the *Heroides*, epistles ii., iii., v., vi., ix., x., xi. ³ Pass Neck. ⁵ Ariadne.

The devel be hys soules bane !
 For had he lawghed, had he loured,
 He moste have be devoured, 41^o
 Yf Adriane ne had ybe.
 And, for she had of hym pite,
 She made hym fro the dethe escape,
 And he made hir a ful fals jape ;
 For aftir this, withyn a while,
 He lefte hir slepynge in an ile,
 Deserte allone, ryght in the se,
 And stale away, and lete hir be ;
 And tooke hir suster Phedra thoo
 With him, and gan to shippe goo. 42^o
 And yet he had yswore to here,
 On alle that evere he myghte swere,
 That so she saved hym hys lyfe,
 He wolde have take hir to hys wife,
 For she desirede nothing ellis,
 In certeyne, as the booke tellis.

But to excusen Eneas
 Fullyche of al his trespas,
 The booke seyth ¹ Mercure, *sauns fayle*,
 Bade hym goo into Itayle, 43^o
 And leve Auffrikes regioun,
 And Dido and hir faire toun.

Thoo sawgh I grave how that to Itayie
 Daun Eneas is goo for to assayle ;
 And how the tempest al began,
 And how he lost hys sterisman,²

¹ *Æneid*, iv. 252, etc. ² The helmsman, Palinurus, was deceived by Somnus, and cast into the sea, the stern being broken off, before reaching the rocks of the Sirens. *Æneid*, v., end

Which that the stere, or he toke kepe,
Smote overe borde, loo, as he slepe.

And also sawgh I how Cybile¹
And Eneas, beside an yle, 440
To helle wente, for to see
His fader Anchyses the free.
How he ther fonde Palinurus,
And Dido, and eke Deiphebus,
And every torment eke in helle
Sawgh he, which is longe to telle.
Which who-so willeth for to knowe,
He moste rede many a rowe
On Virgile or in Claudian,²
Or Daunte,³ that hit telle kan. 450

Tho sawgh I grave al the aryvayle
That Eneas had in Itayle ;
And with kynge Latyne hys tretee,
And alle the batayles that hee
Was at hymselfe, and eke hys knyghtis,
Or he had al ywonne hys ryghtis ;
And how he Turnus⁴ reft his lyfe,
And wanne Labina⁵ to his wife ;
And alle the mervelouse signals
Of the goddys celestials ; 460
How mawgree Juno, Eneas
For al hir sleight and hir compas,
Acheved alle his aventure ;

¹ The Sibyl of Cumæ. *Æneid*, vi. ² Claudius Claudianus wrote. in the fourth century, *De Raptu Proserpinæ*. ³ Cf. *Inferno*.
⁴ King of the Rutulians *Æneid*, x. 76, 616; xii. 926. ⁵ Lavinia, daughter of Latinus.

For Jupiter tooke of hym cure,¹
 At the prayer of Venus, —
 The whiche I prey alwey save us,
 And us ay of oure sorwes lyghte !²

When I had seene al this syghte
 In this noble temple thus,
 “ A, lorde ! ” thought I, “ that madest us, 470
 Yet sawgh I never suche noblesse
 Of ymages, ne suche richesse,
 As I saugh grave in this chirche ;
 But not wote I whoo did hem wirche,
 Ne where I am, ne what contree.
 But now wol I goo oute and see,
 Ryght at the wicket, yf Y kan
 See owghwhere³ stiryng any man,
 That may me telle where I am.”

When I oute at the dores came, 480
 I faste aboute me behelde.
 Then sawgh I but a large felde,
 As fer as that I myghte see,
 Withouten toune, or house, or tree,
 Or bussh, or gras, or eryd⁴ londe ;
 For al the felde nas but sonde,
 As smale as man may se yet lye
 In the desert of Lybye ;
 Ne no maner creature,
 That ys yformed be nature, 490
 Ne sawghe me to rede or wisse.⁵

¹ Care. ² Ease. ³ Anywhere. ⁴ Plowed. ⁵ To advise or inform.

“O Criste,” thought I, “that art in blysse,
 Fro fantome and illusioun
 Me save !” and with devocioun
 Myn eyen to the hevene I caste.

Thoo was I war at the laste,
 That faste be the sonne, as hye
 As kenne myght I with myn ye,
 Me thought I sawgh an egle sore,¹
 But that hit semed moche more 500
 Then I had any egle seyne.
 But, this as soothe as deth certeyne,
 Hyt was of golde, and shone so bryght,
 That never saw men such a syght,
 But-if the hevene hadde ywonne
 Al newe of gold another sonne ;
 So shon the egles fetheres bryghte,²
 And somewhat dounwarde gan hyt lyghte.

SECOND BOOK.

Proem.

Now herkeneth every maner man,
 That Englissh understonde kan,
 And listeneth of my dreame to here ;
 For now at erste shul ye here
 So sely³ an avisyoun,
 That Isaye ne Cipioune,⁴

¹ Cf. *Purgatorio*, ix. 19; also *Metamorphoses*, x. 155. Gany-
 medes was carried off by Jove in the form of an eagle. ² Lines 504-
 507 are not in the MSS. ³ Happy ⁴ Cf. *Parlement of Foules*, l. 31

Ne kynge Nabugodonosor,
 Pharoo, Turnus,¹ ne Elcanor,²
 Ne mette suche a dreame as this.
 Now faire blisfulle, O Cipris,³
 So be my favor at this tyme!
 And ye me to endite and ryme
 Helpeth, that on Parnaso dwelle,
 Be Elicon the clere welle.

10

The Invocation.

O Thought, that wrote al that I mette,
 And in the tresorye hyt shette
 Of my brayne! now shal men se
 Yf any vertu in the be,
 To tellen al my dreame aryght;
 Now kythe thyn engyne⁴ and myght!

20

The Dream.

This egle of whiche I have yow tolde,
 That shone with fethres as of golde,
 Which that so highe gan to sore,
 I gan beholde more and more,
 To se her beaute and the wonder,
 But never was ther dynt of thonder, —
 Ne that thyng that men calle foudre,⁵
 That smote somnetye a toure to powdre,

¹ Cf. *Æneid*, ix. Iris was sent from Jove to Turnus. ² Perhaps Elkanah, 1 Samuel i. 1, etc. ³ That is, Venus. ⁴ Show thine ability. ⁵ Thunderbolt. Cf. *Purgatorio*, ix. 29.

And in his swifte comynge brende, —
 That so swithe gan descende, 30
 As this foule when hyt behelde,
 That I a-roume¹ was in the felde ;
 And with hys grymme pawes stronge,
 Withyn hys sharpe nayles longe,
 Me, fleyng, in a swappe² he hente,
 And with hys sours³ a-gene up wente,
 Me carynge in his clawes starke,
 As lyghtly as I were a larke,
 How high, I cannot telle yow,
 For I came up, I nyste how. 40
 For so astonyed and a-sweved⁴
 Was every vertu in my heved,⁵
 What with his sours and with my drede,
 That al my felyng gan to dede ;⁶
 For-ghi hit was to grete affray.⁷

Thus I longe in hys clawes lay,
 Til at the last he to me spake
 In mannes vois, and seyde, “ Awake !
 And be thou not a-gaste, for shame ! ”
 And callede me by my name. 50
 And for I sholde the bet abreyde,
 Me mette,⁸ “ Awake,” to me he seyde,
 Ryght in the same vois and stevene,⁹
 That useth oon I koude nevene ;¹⁰
 And with that vois, soth for to seyne,
 My mynde came to me ageyne

¹ Roaming. ² Swoop (sweep). ³ Soaring. ⁴ Amazed, as in a
 dream. ⁵ Head ⁶ Grow dead. ⁷ Fright. ⁸ Dreamed. ⁹ Tone
¹⁰ Name.

For hit was goodely seyde to me,
So was hyt never wonte to be.

And herewithalle I gan to stere,
And he me in his fete to-bere, 6a
Til that he felt that I had hete,¹
And felte eke that myn herte bete.
And thoo gan he me to disporte,
And with wordes to comforte,
And sayede twyes, "Seynt Mary!
Thou arte noyouse² for to cary,
And nothyng nedith, *pardee*!
For, al-so wis God helpe me,
As thou noon harme shalt have of this;
And this caas that betydde the is, 70
Is for thy lore and for thy prowē,³ —
Let see! darst thou yet loke now?
Be ful assured, boldely,
I am thy frende." And therewith I
Gan for to wondren in my mynde.
"O God," thought I, "that madeste kynde,⁴
Shal I noon other weyes dye?
Wher⁵ Joves wol me stellefyē,⁶
Or what thinge may this sygnifye?
I neyther am Ennok, ne Elye,⁷ 81
Ne Romulus,⁸ ne Ganymede,
That was ybore up, as men rede,
To hevene with daun Jupiter,
And made the goddys botiller."

¹ Heat. ² Troublesome. ³ Profit. ⁴ Nature. ⁵ Whether
Make a star. ⁷ Cf. the Bible, and *Inferno*, ii. 32. ⁸ Romulus was
carried to heaven by Mars.

Loo, this was thoo my fantasye !
 But he that bare me gan espye
 That I so thoughte, and seyde this :
 " Thow demest of thy-selfe amys ;
 For Joves ys not therabout, —
 I dar wel put the out of doute, — 90
 To make of the as yet a sterre.
 But er I bere the moche ferre,¹
 I wol the telle what I am,²
 And whider thou shalt, and why I cam
 To do thys, so that thou take
 Goode herte, and not for fere quake."
 " Gladly," quod I. " Now wel," quod he
 " First, I, that in my fete have the,
 Of which thou haste a fere and wonder,
 Am dwellynge with the god of thonder, 100
 Whiche that men callen Jupiter,
 That dooth me flee ful ofte fer³
 To do al hys comaundement.
 And for this cause he hath me sent
 To the : now herke, be thy trouthe !
 Certeyn he hath of the routhe,
 That thou so longe trewely
 Hast served so ententyfly
 Hys blynde neviwe Cupido,
 And faire Venus also, 110
 Withoute guerdoun ever yitte,
 And neverthesse hast set thy witte —

¹ Farther ² Dante had a similar conversation. *Inferno*, ii. 40.
³ Far.

Although in thy hede ful lytel is —
To make songes, dytees, and bookys
In ryme, or elles in cadence,
As thou best canst in reverence
Of Love, and of hys servantes eke,
That have hys servyse soght, and seke ;
And peynest the to preyse hys arte,
Although thou haddest never parte ; 120
Wherfore, al-so God me blesse,
Joves halt hyt grete humblesse,
And vertu eke, that thou wolt make
A nyghte ful ofte thyn hede to ake,
In thy studye so thou writest,
And evermo of love enditest,
In honour of hym and preysynges,
And in his folkes furtherynges,
And in hir matere al devisest,
And noght hym nor his folke dispisest, 130
Although thou maiste goo in the daunce
Of hem that hym lyst not avaunce.

“ Wherfore, as I seyde, ywys,
Jupiter considereth wel this ;
And also, beau sir, other thynges ;
That is, that thou hast no tydynges
Of Loves folke, yf they be glade,
Ne of noght elles that God made ;
And noght oonly fro ferre contree,
That ther no tydyng cometh to thee, 140
Not of thy verray neyghebors,
That duellen almoste at thy dors,

Thou herist neyther that nor this,
 For when thy labour doon al ys,
 And hast ymade rekenynges,
 Instid of reste and newe thynges,
 Thou goost home to thy house anoon,
 And, also dombe as any stoon,
 Thou sittest at another booke,
 Tyl fully dasewyd ys thy looke, 150
 And lyvest thus as an heremyte,¹
 Although thyn aostynence ys lyte.²

“ And therfore Joves, thorgh hys grace,
 Wol that I bere the to a place,
 Which that hight the House of Fame,
 To do the somme disport and game,
 In somme recompensacioun
 Of labour and devocioun
 That thou hast had, loo ! causeles,
 To Cupido the rechcheles. 160
 And thus this god, thorgh his merite,
 Wol with somme maner thinge the quyte,
 So that thou wolt be of goode chere.
 For truste wel that thou shalt here,
 When we be come there I seye,
 Mo wonder thynges, dar I leye,
 Of Loves folke moo tydynges,
 Both sothe-sawes and leysinges ;³
 And moo loves newe begonne,
 And longe yserved loves wonne ; 170
 And moo loves casuelly

¹ Hermit ² Little. ³ Truth-sayings and lies.

I'hat betyde, no man wote why,
 But 'as a blende man stert an hare ;'
 And more jolytee and fare,
 While that they fynde love of stele,¹
 As thinketh hem, and over al wele ;
 Mo discordes, and moo jelousies,
 Mo murmures, and moo novelries,
 And moo dissymulaciouns,
 And feyned reparaciouns ; 180
 And moo berdys in two oures —
 Without rasour or sisoures —
 Ymade,² then greynes be of sondes ;
 And eke moo holdyng in hondes,³
 And also mo renoveilaunces
 Of olde forleten aqueyntaunces ;
 Mo love-dayes,⁴ and acordes,
 Then on instrumentes ben cordes ;
 And eke of loves moo eschaunges,
 Than ever cornes were in graunges ;⁵ 190
 Unnethe maistow trowen this ? ”
 Quod he. “ Noo, helpe me God so wys ! ”
 Quod I. “ Noo ? why ? ” quod he. “ For hytte
 Were impossible to my witte,
 Though that Fame had al the pies ⁶
 In alle a realme, and alle the spies,
 How that yet he shulde here al this,
 Or they espie hyt.” “ O yis, yis ! ”

¹ True as steel. ² More persons duped in two hours. Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, ll. 4096, 10,403. ³ False accusations. ⁴ Days for the settlement of disputes in a friendly way. Cf. *Canterbury Tales* . 253 ⁵ Barns. ⁶ Magpies.

Quod he to me, "that kan I preve
 Be resoun, worthy for to leve,¹ 200
 So that thou geve thyn advertence
 To understonde my sentence.

"First shalt thou here where she dwel^{leth},
 And so thyn oun boke hyt tellith,
 Hir paleys stant as I shal sey
 Ryght even in-myddes of the wey,
 Betwexen hevene, erthe, and see ;²
 That whatsoever in al these three
 Is spoken either prevy or aperte,³
 The aire therto ys so overte,³ 210
 And stant eke in so juste⁴ a place,
 That every soun mot to hyt pace,
 Or what so cometh fro any tonge,
 Be hyt rouned, red, or songe,
 Or spoke in suerte or in drede,
 Certeyn hyt moste thider nede.

"Now herkene wel ; for-why⁵ I wille
 Tellen the a propre skille,⁶
 And worche a demonstracioun
 In myn ymagynacioun. 220

"Geffrey, thou wost^e ryght wel this,
 That every kyndely thyng that is,
 Hath a kyndely stede⁷ ther he
 May best in hyt conserved be ;
 Unto whiche place every thyng,
 Thorgh his kyndely enclynyng,
 Moveth for to come to,

¹ Be believed. ² In this description Chaucer imitates his favorite
 Dvid, *Metamorphoses*, xii. ³ Open (Lat. *apertus*, Fr. *ouvert*),
 Precise. ⁵ Because. ⁶ True distinction. ⁷ Natural place.

Whan that it is away therfro.
 As thus, loo, thou maist al day se
 That any thinge that hevy be,
 As stoon or lede, or thyng of wight,¹
 And bere hyt never so hye on hight,
 Lat goo thyn hande, hit falleth doune.

230

“ Ryght so sey I, be fire, or sounne,
 Or smoke, or other thynges lyghte,
 Alwey they seke upward on highte,
 While eche of hem is at his large ;²
 Lyghte thinge upwarde,³ and dounwarde charge.

“ And for this cause mayste thou see,
 That every ryver to the see

240

Enclyned ys to goo by kynde.
 And by these skilles,⁵ as I fynde,
 Hath fyssh duellynge in floode and see,
 And trees eke in erthe bee.

Thus every thinge by this reasoun

Hath his propre mansyoun,⁶

To which he seketh to repaire,

As there hit shulde not apaire.⁷

Loo, this sentence ys knowen kouthe⁸

Of every philosophres mouthe,

250

As Aristotile and daun Platoun,

And other clerkys many oon,

And to confirme my reasoun,

Thou wost wel this, that speche is soun,

Or elies no man myght hyt here ;

Now herke what I wol the lere.

¹ Weight. ² Free (at large). ³ (Tend) upward. ⁴ Heavy things
 Reasons. ⁵ Abiding-place. ⁶ Suffer detriment ⁷ Familiar'y.

" Soune ys noght but eyre ybroken,¹
 And every speche that ys yspoken,
 Lowde or pryvee, foule or faire,
 In his substaunce ys but aire ; 260
 For as flaumbe ys but lyghted smoke,
 Ryght soo soune ys aire ybroke.
 But this may be in many wyse,
 Of which I wil the twoo devyse,
 As soune that cometh of pipe or harpe.
 For whan a pipe is blowen sharpe,
 The aire ys twyst with violence,
 And rent : loo, this ys my sentence ;²
 Eke, whan men harpe strynges smyte,
 Whether hyt be moche or lyte, 270
 Loo, with the stroke the ayre to-breketh ;
 • Right so hit breketh whan men speketh.
 Thus wost thou wel what thinge is speche.

" Now hennesforthe I wol the teche,
 How every speche, or noyse, or soune,
 Thurgh hys multiplicacioun,
 Thogh hyt were piped of a mouse,
 Mote nede come to Fames House.
 I preve hyt thus — take hede now —
 Be experience, for yf that thou 280
 Throwe on water now a stoon,
 Wel wost thou hyt wol make anon
 A litel roundelle as a sercle,
 Paraventure brode as a covercle ;³
 And ryght anon thou shalt see wele,

¹ Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 12,276. ² Opinion. ³ Pot-lid

That sercle wol cause another whele,
And that the thridde, and so forth, brother,
Every sercle causynge other,
Wydder than hymselfe was.

And this fro roundel to compas, 290

Eche aboute other goynge,
Caused of othres sterynge,
And multiplynge evermoo,
Til that hyt be so fer ygoo
That hyt at bothe brynkes bee.

Al thou mowen hyt not ysee
Above, hyt gooth yet ay under,
Although thou thenke hyt a grete wounder.

And who-so seyth of trouthe I varye,¹

Bid hym proven the contrarye. 300

And ryght thus every worde, ywys,

That lowde or pryvee yspoken ys,

Moveth first an ayre aboute,

And of thys movynge, out of doute,

Another ayre anon ys meved,

As I have of the watir preved,

'That every cercle causeth other.

Ryght so of ayre, my leve brother ;

Everych ayre other stereth²

More and more, and speche up bereth, 310

Or voys, or noyse, or worde, or soun,

Aye through multiplicacioun,

Til hyt be atte House of Fame, —

Take yt in ernest or in game.

¹ I vary from truth. ² Directeth.

"Now have I tolde, yf ye have in mynde,
 How speche or soun, of pure kynde
 Enclyned ys upwarde to meve ;
 This mayst thou fele wel y-preve.
 And that summe stide,¹ ywys,
 That every thyng enclyned to ys, 320
 Hath his kyndelyche stede :
 That sheweth hyt, withoute drede,
 That kyndely the mansioun ²
 Of every speche, of every soun,
 Be hyt eyther foule or faire.
 Hath hys kynde place in ayre.
 And syn that every thyng that is
 Out of hys kynde place, ywys,
 Moveth thidder for to goo,
 Gif hyt a-wey be therfro, 330
 As I before have preved the,
 Hyt seweth,³ every soun, *parde*,
 Moveth kyndely to pace
 Al up into his kyndely place.
 And this place of which I telle,
 Ther as Fame lyst to duelle,
 Ys sette amyddys of these three,
 Hevene, erthe, and eke the see,
 As most conservatyf the soun.
 Than ys this the conclusyoun, 340
 That every speche of every man,
 As I the telle first began,
 Moveth up on high to pace
 Kyndely to Fames place.

¹ Place. ² Naturally the abode. ³ Followeth.

" Telle me this feythfully,
 Have I not preved thus symply,
 Withouten any subtilite
 Of speche, or grete prolyxite
 Of termes of philosophie,
 Of figures of poetrie, 350
 Or coloures, or rethorike ?

Pardee, hit oughte the to lyke ;
 For harde langage, and hard matere
 Ys encombrouse for to here
 Attones ; wost thou not wel this ? "
 And I answered and seyde, " Yis."

" A ha ! " quod he, " lo, so I can,
 Lewdely to a lewed ¹ man
 Speke, and shewe hym swyche skiles.²
 That he may shake hem be the biles,³ 360
 So palpable they shulden be.

But telle me this now pray I the,
 How thenketh the my conclusyoun ? "

" A goode persuasioun,"
 Quod I, " hyt is ; and lyke to be
 Ryght so as thou hast preved me."
 ' Be God," quod he, " and as I leve,⁴

Thou shalt have yet, or hit be eve,
 Of every word of thys sentence
 A preve by experience ; 370
 And with thyn eres heren wel
 Toppe and taylle, and everidel,⁵

¹ Unlearnedly to a layman. ² Reasons. ³ Become acquainted
 with them. (Bills is an appropriate word in an eagle's mouth.
 Believe ⁵ Everything.

That every word that spoken ys
 Cometh into Fames House, ywys,
 As I have seyde ; what wilt thou more ? ”
 And with this word upper ¹ to sore
 He gan, and seyde, “ Be Seynt Jame !
 Now wil we speken al of game.”

“ How fairest thou ? ” quod he to me.
 “ Wel,” quod I. “ Now see,” quod he, 330
 “ By thy trouthe, yonde adoune,
 Wher ² that thou knowest any toune,
 Or hous, or any other thinge.
 And whan thou hast of ought knowynge,
 Looke that thou warne me,
 And I anon shal telle the
 How fer that thou art now therfro.”

And I adoun gan loken thoo,
 And behelde feldes and playnes,
 And now hilles, and now mountaynes, 390
 Now valeys, and now forestes,
 And now unnethes grete bestes ;
 Now ryveres, now citees,
 Now tounes, and now grete trees,
 Now shippes seyllynge in the see.

But thus sone in a while hee
 Was flowen fro the grounde so hye,
 That al the worlde, as to myn ye,
 No more semede than a prikke ;
 Or elles was the aire so thikke 400
 That I ne myghte not discernen.

¹ Higher (more up). Pleasantry ² Whether.
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With that he spak to me as yerne,¹
 And seyde : " Seestow any token,
 Or ought that in this world is of spoken ? "

I seyde, " Nay." " No wonder nys,"

Quod he, " for half so high as this
 Nas Alexandre Macedo ;²
 Ne the kynge, daun Cipio,³
 That saw in dreame, at poynt devys,⁴

Helle and erth, and paradys ; 410

Ne eke the wrecche Didalus,⁵

Ne his childe, nyse Ykarus,
 That fleegh so highe that the hete
 His wynges malte, and he fel wete
 In myd the see, and ther he dreynt,
 For whom was maked moch compleynt.

" Now turne upward," quod he, " thy face.

And beholde this large place,

This eyre ; but loke thou ne be

Adrad of hem that thou shalt se ; 420

For in this region certeyn

Dwelleth many a citezeyn,

Of which that speketh daun Plato.

These ben eyrysshe bestes,⁶ lo ! "

And so saw I alle that meynee,⁷

Boothe goone and also flee.

" Now," quod he thoo, " cast up thyn ye ;

¹ Briskly. ² Alexander dreamed at Dios, before his Asiatic campaign (see Josephus, *Antiquities*, xi. 8, 5), and after the battle of Issus. See Clough's *Plutarch*, iv. 189. ³ Cf. ii. 6. ⁴ Exactly Dædalus and his son Icarus flew with wings of wax. Cf. *Inferno*, xvii. 109; *Metamorphoses*, viii. 183. ⁵ Ethereal creatures Cf. Rev. iv. 6-9; and Wiclif's version of 1 Cor. xv. 44, " It is sowun beestli bodi." ⁷ Company.

Se yonder, loo, the Galoxie,
 Whiche men clepeth the Melky Weye,
 For hit ys white : and somme, parfeye 430
 Kallen hyt Watlynge strete,¹
 That ones was ybrente wyth hete,
 Whan the sonnes sonne, the rede,
 That highte Phetoun, wolde lede
 Algate his fader carte, and gye.²
 The carte hors gonne wel espye
 That he ne koude no governaunce,
 And ganne for to lepe and launce,³
 And beren hym now up, now down,
 Til that he sey the Scorpioun, 440
 Whiche that in heven a synge⁴ is yit.
 And he for-ferde⁵ lost hys wyt
 Of that, and lat the reynes goon
 Of his hors ; and they anoon
 Gonne up to mounten, and doun descende,
 Til both the ayre and erthe brende ;
 Til Jubiter, loo, atte laste
 Hym slowe, and fer fro the cart caste.
 Loo, ys it not a mochil myschaunce,
 To lat a foole han governaunce 450
 Of thing that he can not demeyne ? ”⁶

And with this word, sothe for to seyne,
 He gan upper alwey for to sore,
 And gladded me ay more and more,
 So feythfully to me spake he.

¹ After the Roman road across South Britain. ² Guide. ³ Rush
 m. ⁴ Sign. ⁵ Much frightened. ⁶ Manage.

Tho gan I loken under me,
 And behelde the ayerisshe bestes,
 Cloudes, mystes, and tempestes,
 Snowes, hayles, reynes, wyndes,
 And thengendrynge in hir kyndes, 460
 Alle the wey thugh whiche I came ;
 "O God," quod I, "that made Adame,
 Moche is thy myght and thy noblesse."

And thoo thought I upon Boesse,¹
 'That writ of "Thought may flee so hye,
 With fetheres of Philosophye,
 To passen everyche elemente ;
 And whan he hath so fer ywente,
 Than may be seen, behynde hys bak,
 Cloude, and erthe," that I of spak. 470

Thoo gan I wexen in a were,²
 And seyde, "I wote wel I am here ;
 But wher in body or in gost
 I not ³ ywys, but God, thou wost !"
 For more clere entendement ⁴
 Nas me never yit ysent.
 And than thought I on Marcian,⁵
 And eke of Antecaudian,⁶
 That sooth was her descripcioun

¹ See Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*, book iv., met. i. In the version made by Chaucer, there is reference to Thought, clothed in the feathers of Philosophy, being made a knight of God and coming to the knowledge of God by seeking pure truth. ² An uncertainty. ³ Know not. ⁴ Understanding. ⁵ Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 14,068. Martianus Mineus Felix Capella, author of the *Nuptial of Philology and Mercury*, of which book viii. (857) gives a hint of the true system of astronomy. It is quoted by Copernicus. ⁶ Cf. *Parlement of Foules*, l. 316. *Anticlaudianus* is the title of a poem by Alanus de Insulis.

Of alle hevenes regioun, 480
As fer as that I sey the preve ;¹
Therefore I kan hem now beleve.

With that this egle began to crye :
" Lat be," quod he, " thy fantasye ;
Wilt thou lere of sterres aught ? "
" Nay, certenly," quod I, " ryght naught "
" And why ? " " For I am now to olde."
" Elles I wolde the have tolde,"
Quod he, " the sterres names, lo,
And al the hevenes sygnes ther to, 490
And which they ben." " No fors," quod I.
" Yis, *pardee*," quod he, " wostow why ?
For whan thou redest poetrie,
How goddes gonne stellifye
Briddes, fische, best, or him, or here,
As the ravene or eyther bere,²
Or Arionis harp fyne,³
Castor, Poley, or Delphyne,⁴
Or Athalantes Doughtres sevene,⁵
How al these arne set in hevne ; 500
For though thou have hem ofte on honde,
Yet nostow not wher that they stonde."
" No fors," quod I, " hyt is no nede.
I leve ⁶ as wele, so God me spede,
Hem that write of this matere,
Alle though I knew her places here ;
And eke thy selven here so bryghte

¹ Saw the proof. ² Ursa Major or Ursa Minor. ³ The story of Arion and his cithara is found in Ovid, *Fasti*, ii. 82. ⁴ The dolphin. The Pleiades, daughters of Atlas ⁵ Believe.

Hyt shulde shenden al my syghte,
 To loke on hem." "That may wel be,"
 Quod he. And so forthe bare he me 510
 A while, and than he gan to crye,
 That never herd I thing so hye,¹
 "Now up the hede; for alle ys wele;
 Seynt Julyane,² loo, bon hostele!
 Se here the House of Fame, lo!
 Maistow not heren that I do?"
 "What?" quod I. "The grete soun,"
 Quod he, "that rumbleth up and doun
 In Fames House, ful of tydynges,
 Bothe of feire speche and chidynges, 520
 And of fals and that soth compouned.
 Herke wel; hyt is not rouned.³
 Herestow not the grete swogh?"
 "Yis, perde," quod I, "wel ynogh."
 "And what soun is it lyke?" quod hee.
 "Peter! betynge of the see,"
 Quod I, "agen the roches holowe,
 Whan tempest doth the shippes swalowe,
 And lat a man stonde, out of doute,
 A myle thens, and here hyt route.⁴ 530
 Or elles lyke the last humblynge⁵
 After a clappe of oo thundringe.
 When Joves hath the aire ybete;
 But yt doth me for fere swete."⁶

¹ Loud. ² St. Julian was the patron of lodging-places. Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 340. ³ Whispered. ⁴ Bellow. ⁵ Low, dead sound. ⁶ For fear sweat. Lines 526-533 should be compared with Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, xii. 49.

"Nay, drede the not therof," quod he,
 "Hyt is nothinge wille biten the,
 Thou shalt non harme have truly."

And with this word both he and I
 As nygh the place arryved were
 As men may casten with a spere. 540
 I nyste how, but in a strete
 He sette me faire on my fete,
 And seyde, "Walke forth a pace,
 And take thyn aventure or case,¹
 That thou shalt fynde in Fames place."

"Now," quod I, "while we han space
 To speke, or that I goo fro the,
 For the love of God, telle me,
 In sooth, that wil I of the lere,²
 Yf thys noyse that I here 550
 Be, as I have herd the tellen,
 Of folke that doun in erthe dwellen,
 And cometh here in the same wyse
 As I the herde, or this, devyse?
 That there lives body nys
 In al that hous that yonder ys,
 That maketh al this loude fare?"

"Noo," quod he, "by Seynte Clare!
 And, also wis God rede me,
 But o thinge wil I warne the, 560
 Of the whiche thou wolt have wonder.
 Loo, to the House of Fame yonder,
 Thou woost now how cometh every speche,

¹ Chance. ² Learn

Hyt nedeth noght efte the to teche.
 But understonde now ryght wel this,
 Whan any speche ycomen ys
 Up to the paleys, anon ryght
 Hyt wexeth lyke the same wight,
 Which that the worde in erthe mak,
 Be hyt clothed rede or biak : 570
 And so were hys lykenesse,
 And spake the word, that thou wilt gesse
 That it the same body be,
 Man or woman, he or she.
 And ys not this a wonder thyng ? ”
 “ Yis,” quod I tho, “ by hevene kyng ! ”
 And with this worde, “ Farewel,” quod he,
 “ And here I wol abyden the,
 And God of hevene sende the grace,
 Some goode to lerne in this place.” 580
 And I of him toke leve anon,
 And gan forthe to the paleys gon.

THIRD BOOK.

The Invocation.

O God of science¹ and of lyght,
 Apollo, thurgh thy grete myght,
 This lytel laste boke thou gye !²
 Nat that I wilne for maistrye

¹ Knowledge. ² Direct. Compare this invocation with Dante's *Paradiso* i. 13-27.

Here art poetical be shewed ;
 But, for the ryme ys lyght and lewed,
 Yit make hyt sumwhat agreable,
 Though somme vers fayle in a sillable ;
 And that I do no diligence,
 To shewe crafte, but o sentence.¹ 10
 And gif devyne vertu nowe
 Wilt helpe me to shewe yowe,
 That in myn hede ymarked ys, —
 Loo, that is for to menen this,
 The Hous of Fame² for to descryve, —
 Thou shalte se me go as blyve
 Unto the next laurer I see,
 And kysse yt, for hyt is thy tree.
 Now entreth in my brest anoon !

The Dream.

Whan I was fro thys egle goon, 20
 I gan beholde upon this place.
 And certein, or I ferther pace,
 I wol yow al thys shape devyse
 Of hous and citee ; and al the wyse
 How I gan to thys place aproche,
 That stood upon so hygh a roche,
 Hiere stant there noone in Spayne.
 But up I clombe with alle payne,
 And though to clymbe grevede me,
 Yit I ententyf was to see, 30

¹ Meaning. ² Compare with this book Pope's *Temple of Fame*

And for to powren wondre lowe,
 Yf I koude eny weyes knowe
 What maner stoon this roche was,
 For hyt was lyke a thyng of glas,
 But that hyt shoone ful more clere ;
 But of what congeled matere
 Hyt was, nyste I redely.

But at the laste espied I,
 And founde that hit was everydele
 A roche of yse, and not of stele. 40
 Thought I, " By Seynt Thomas ¹ of Kent !
 This were a feble fundament,
 To biden on a place hye ;
 He ought him lytel glorifye
 That heron bilte, God so me save ! "

Tho sawgh I the halfe y-grave
 With famouse folkes names fele,²
 That had yben in mochel wele,³
 And her fames wide y-blowe.
 But wel unnethes koude I knowe 50
 Any lettres for to rede
 Hir names be ; for, oute of drede,
 They were almost of thawed ⁴ so,
 That of the lettres oon or two
 Were molte away of every name,
 So unfamouse was wox hir fame ;
 But men seyn, " What may ever laste ? "

Thoo gan I in myn herte caste,
 That they were molte away with hete,

¹ Of Canterbury. ² Many. ³ Good fortune. ⁴ Thawed off

And not away with stormes bete. 6a

For on that other syde I say
Of this hille, that northewarde lay,
How hit was writen ful of names
Of folkes that hadden grete fames
Of olde tymes, and yet they were
As fressh as men had writen hem here
The selfe day ryght, or that oure
That I upon hem gan to poure.

But wel I wiste what yt made ;
Hyt was conserved with the shade, 7a

Alle this wrytynge that I sigh,¹
Of a castel stode on high ;
And stode eke on so colde a place,
That hete hyt myght not deface.

Thoo gan I up the hille to goone,
And fonde upon the cop a woone,²
That alle the men that ben on lyve
Ne han the kunnyng to describe
The Beaute of that ylke place,
Ne coude casten no compace 8a

Swich another for to make,
That myght of Beaute be hys make ;³
Ne wonderlyche so y-wrought,
That hyt astonyeth yit my thought,
And maketh alle my wytte to swynke⁴
On the castel to bethynke.

So that the grete Beaute,
The caste,⁵ the curiosite

¹ Saw. ² Dwelling. ³ Mate. ⁴ Labor. ⁵ Contrivance.

Ne kan I not to yow devyse,
My wit ne may me not suffice.

9c

But natheles alle the substance
I have yit in my remembrance ;
For-why me thoughte, by Seynte Gyle !¹
Alle was of stone of beryle,
Bothe castel and the toure,
And eke the halle, and every boure,²
Wythouten peces or joynynges.
But many subtile compassinges,
Rabewyures and pynacles,
Ymageries and tabernacles,³
I say ;⁴ and ful eke of wyndowes,
As flakes falle in grete snowes.
And eke in ech of the pynacles
Weren sondry habitacles,
In whiche stode, alle withoute,
Ful the castel alle aboute,
Of al maner of mynestalles,
And gestiours, that tellen tales
Bothe of wepinge and of game,
Of alle that longeth unto Fame.

100

110

There herd I pleyen upon an harpe
That sowneth bothe wel and sharpe,
Orpheus ful craftely,
And on the syde faste by
Sat the harper Orioun⁵
And Eacides Chiroun,⁶

¹ Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 17,585. ² Chamber. ³ Niches. ⁴ Saw
Cf. 1. 497. ⁵ Chiron, of the family of Æacus, the severe tutor of
Achilles Cf. Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, l. 16; *Fasti*, v. 379.

And other harpers many oon.
 And the grete Glascurioun,¹
 And smale harpers with her gleees,
 Saten under hym in sees,² 120
 And gunne on hym upwarde to gape,
 And countrefet hym as an ape,
 Or as crafte countrefeteth kynde.³

Tho saugh I stonden hym behynde,
 A-fer fro hem, alle be hemselfe,
 Many thousand tymes twelve,
 That maden lowde menstralcies
 In cornemuse,⁴ and shalmyes,⁵
 And many other maner pipe,
 That craftely begunne to pipe, 130
 Bouthe in doucet⁶ and in riede,
 That ben at festes with the bride.
 And many flowte and liltyng⁷ horne,
 And pipes made of grene corne,
 As han thise lytel herde gromes,⁸
 That kepen bestis in the bromes.⁹

Ther saugh I than Atiteris,
 And of Athenes daun Pseustis,
 And Marcia¹⁰ that lost her skynne,
 Bothe in face, body, and chynne, 140
 For that she wolde envien, loo,
 To pipen bet than Apollo.

¹ See the ballads of Glasgerion, in Percy's *Reliques*, vol. iii. ; and note I, § 4, of the Essay in vol. i., for comments on this passage.
² Seats (Lat. *sedes*). ³ Nature. ⁴ A wind instrument. ⁵ A string instrument. ⁶ A sort of pipe. (Dulcimer?) ⁷ Sprightly. ⁸ Grooms ⁹ Heaths. ¹⁰ Marsyas was a male flute-player of Phrygia (*Metamorphoses*, vi. 382-400). Atiteris and Pseustis are now unknown.

There saugh I fames, olde and yonge,
 Pipers of alle Duche tonge,
 To lerne love-daunces, sprynges,
 Reues,¹ and these straunge thynges.

Tho saugh I in another place,
 Stonden in a large space
 Of hem that maken bloody soun,
 In trumpe, beme,² and claryoun ; 150
 For in feight and blodeshedynges
 Ys used gladly clarionynges.

Ther herd I trumpen Messenus,³
 Of whom that speketh Virgilius.

There herd I trumpe Joab also,
 Theodomas,⁴ and other mo,
 And al that usede clarioun,
 In Cataloigne and Aragoun,
 That in her tyme famous were
 To lerne, saugh I trumpe there. 160

Ther saugh I sit in other sees,
 Pleyinge upon sondry gleees,
 Whiche that I kannot nevene,⁵
 Moo than sterres ben in hevene,
 Of whiche I nyl not now ryme,
 For ese of yow, and losse of tyme :
 For tyme ylost, this knowen ye,
 Be no way may recovered be.

There saugh I pleyen jugelours,
 Magiciens, and tregetours,⁶ 170

¹ Reyes, quick German dances. ² Horn. ³ Misenius. *Aeneid* vi. 162. ⁴ Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 14,056. ⁵ Name. ⁶ Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 14,995, 15,917.

And phitonisses,¹ charmeresses,
 Olde wyches, sorceresses, ,
 That usen exorsisaciouns,
 And eke thes fumygaciouns ;
 And clerkes eke, which konne wel
 Alle this magikes naturel,
 That craftely doon her ententes,
 To maken, in certeyn ascendentes,
 Ymages, lo, thugh which magike,
 To make a man ben hool or syke. 180
 Ther saugh I the quene Medea,²
 And Circes eke, and Calipsa.
 Ther saugh I Hermes Ballenus,³
 Limete,⁴ and eke Symon Magus.
 Ther sawgh I tho, and knew by name,
 That by such art doon men han fame.
 Ther saugh I colle tregetour⁵
 Upon a table of sygamour
 Pleyen an uncouth thyng to telle ;
 I saugh him carien a wynd-melle 190
 Under a walshe-note shale.⁶
 What shuld I make lenger tale
 Of alle the pepil I ther say,
 Fro hennes into domesday ?
 Whan I had al this folkys beholde,
 And fonde me louse,⁷ and noght ycolde,

¹ Pythonesses. ² The wife of Jason. See Ovid, *Heroides*, ep. xi. c. f. *Dethe of Blaunche*, l. 330. ³ Hermes Balanus means Mercury the Bathman. By some reference is supposed to be intended to Hermes Trismegistus, the reputed founder of alchemy, though the account of the Fountain of Mercury given by Ovid in the *Fasti*, v. 673, makes the title Balanus apt. ⁴ Spelled also Lumete, Lymote, and Lymeste. ⁵ A false trickster. ⁶ Walnut shell. ⁷ Loose.

And oft I musede longe while
 Upon these walles of berile,
 That shoone ful lyghter than a glas,
 And made wel more than hit was, 200
 To semen every thyng, ywis,
 As kynde thyng¹ of Fames is ;
 I gan to romen til I fonde
 The castel gate on my ryght honde,
 Which that so wel y-corven was,
 That never suche another nas ;
 And yit it was be aventure
 Ywrought, as often as be cure.²

Hyt nedeth noght yow more to tellen,
 To make yow to longe duellen, 210
 Of these gates florissinges,³
 Ne of compasses,⁴ ne of kervynges,
 Ne how they hat in masoneries,
 As corbetz, ful of ymageryes.
 But, Lord ! so faire yt was to shewe
 For hit was alle with gold behewe.
 But in I went, and that anoon ;
 Ther mette I cryinge many oon, —
 “ A larges, larges ! hald up wel !
 God save the lady of thys pel,⁵ 220
 Our oun gentil lady Fame,
 And hern that wilnen to have name
 Of us ! ” Thus herd I crien alle,
 And faste comen out of halle,

¹ A natural quality (Exaggeration.) ² Design. ³ Adornment-
 Contrivances. ⁴ Palace.

And shoon nobles and sterlynges.¹
 And somme crouned were as kynges,
 With corounes wroght ful of losynges;²
 And many ryban, and many frenges
 Were on her clothes trewely.

Thoo atte last aspyed I 230
 That pursevauntes and herauldes,
 That crien ryche folkes laudes,
 Hyt weren; alle and every man
 Of hem, as I yow tellen can,
 Had on him throwen a vesture,
 Whiche that men clepen a cote armure,
 Enbrowded wonderlyche ryche,
 As though ther nere nought ylyche.
 But noght wyl I, so mote I thryve,
 Ben aboute to dyscryve 240
 Al these armes that ther weren,
 That they thus on her cotes beren,
 For hyt to me were impossible;
 Men myghte make of hem a bible,
 Twenty foote thykke, I trowe.
 For certeyn who-so koude i-knowe
 Myghte ther alle the armes seen,
 Of famouse folke that han ybeen
 In Auffrike, Europe, and Asye,
 Syth first began the chevalrie. 250

Loo! how shulde I now tel al thys?
 Ne of the halle eke what nede is

¹ Showed nobles and silver pieces ² Lozenges, though *Caxton* printed "lesynges," lies.

To tellen yow that every walle
 Of hit, and flore, and roof, and alle,
 Was plated half a foote thikke
 Of gold, that nas no thyng wikke,¹
 But, for to prove in alle wyse,
 As fyne as ducat in Venyse,
 Of whiche to litel al in my pouche is ?
 And they wer set as thik of nouchis ²
 Fyne, of the fynest stones faire,
 That men reden in the Lapidaire,
 As greses ³ grown in a mede.
 But hit were alle to longe to rede
 The names ; and therfore I pace.

26c

But in this lusty and ryche place,
 That Fames halle called was,
 Ful moche prees of folke ther nas,
 Ne crowdyng, for to mochil prees.
 But al on hye, above a dees,
 Sit in a see ⁴ imperialle,
 That made was of a rubee alle,
 Which that a carbuncle ys ycalled,
 I saugh perpetually ystalled,
 A femynyne creature ;
 That never formed by Nature
 Nas suche another thing yseye.
 For altherfirst, soth for to seye,
 Me thoughte that she was so lyte,⁵
 That the lengthe of a cubite
 Was lengere than she semede be ;

270

28c

¹ Debased. ² Ouches. ³ Grasses. ⁴ Seat. ⁵ Little

This was gret marvaylle to me,
 Hir tho so wonderly streighte,
 That with hir fete the erthe she reighte,¹
 And with her hed she touched hevene,
 Ther as shynen sterres sevene.²
 And therto eke, as to my witte,
 I saugh a gretter wonder yitte,
 Upon her eyen to beholde,
 But certeyn I hem never tolde.³
 For as feele⁴ yen had she,
 As fetheres upon foules be,
 Or weren on the bestes foure,⁵
 That Goddes trone gunne honoure,
 As Johan writ in thapocalips.
 Hir heere that oundye was and crips,⁶
 As burned⁷ gold hyt shoon to see.
 And sothe to tellen also shee
 Had also fele up stondyng eres
 And tonges, as on bestes heres ;
 And on hir fete wexen saugh I
 Partriches winges redely.

290

300

But, Lorde ! the perry⁸ and the richesse
 I saugh sittying on this godesse !
 And, Lord ! the hevenysshe melodye,
 Of songes ful of armonye,
 I herd aboute her trone ysonge,
 That al the paleys walles ronge !
 So songe the myghty Muse,

¹ Reached. ² Cf. ii. 499. ³ Counted. ⁴ Many. ⁵ Cf. ii. 424 ;
 and Rev. iv. 6. ⁶ Wavy and crisp. ⁷ Burnished. ⁸ Precious
 stones.

That cleped ys Caliope, 310
And hir eighte sustren eke
That in her face semen meke ;
And evermo eternally
They synge of Fame as thoo herd I :
“ Heryed be thou and thy name,
Goddesse of renoun or Fame.”

Tho was I war, loo, atte laste,
As I myn eyen gan up caste,
That thys ilke noble quene
On her shuldres gan sustene 320
Bothe armes, and the name
Of thoo that hadde large fame ;
Alexander, and Hercules
That with a shert hys lyfe les !
And thus fonde I syttyng this goddesse,
In noble honour and rychesse ;
Of which I stynte a while nowe,
Other thinge to tellen yowe.

Tho saugh I stonde on eyther syde,
Streighte down to the dores wide, 330
Fro the dees¹ many a pelere
Of metal, that shoon not ful clere,
But though they ner of no rychesse,
Yet they were made for gret noblesse,
And in hem gret sentence.²
And folkes of digne reverence,
Of whiche I wil yow telle fonde,³
Upon the piler saugh I stonde.

¹ Dais. ² Meaning. ³ Try.

Alderfirste,¹ loo, ther I sighe,
 Upon a piler stonde on highe, 340
 That was of lede and yren fyne,
 Hym of secte Saturnyne,²
 The Ebrayke Josephus the olde,
 That of Jewes gestes tolde ;
 And he bare on hys shuldres hye,
 The fame up of the Jurye.
 And by hym stonden other sevene,
 Wise and worthy for to nevene,
 To helpen him bere up the charge,
 Hyt was so hevy and so large. 350
 And for they writen of batayles,
 As wel as other olde mervayles,
 Therfor was, loo, thys pilere,
 Of whiche that I yow telle here,
 Of lede and yren bothe ywys.
 For yren Martes metal ys,
 Which that God is of batayle.
 And the lede, withouten faille,
 Ys, loo, the metal of Saturne,
 That hath a ful large whele ³ to turne. 360
 Thoo stoden forthe on every rowe
 Of hem which that I koude knowe,
 Though I hem noght be ordre telle,
 To make yow to longe to duelle.
 These, of whiche I gynne rede,
 There saugh I stonde, out of drede,
 Upon an yren piler stronge,

¹ First of all. ² The gloomy class of authors. ³ Orbit.

That peynted was, al endelonge,
 With tigres blode in every place,
 The Tholauson ¹ that highte Stace, 370
 That bare of Thebes up the fame
 Upon his shuldres, and the name
 Also of cruelle Achilles.
 And by him stood, withouten lees,
 Ful wonder hye on a pilere ²
 Of yren, he, the gret Omere ;
 And with him Dares and Tytus ³
 Before, and eke he Lollius, ⁴
 And Guydo eke de Columpnis, ⁵
 And Englyssh Gaunfride ⁶ eke, ywis. 380
 And eche of these, as have I joye,
 Was besye for to bere up Troye.
 So hevy therof was the fame,
 That for to bere hyt was no game.
 But yet I gan ful wel espie,
 Betwex hem was a litil envye.
 Oon seyde that Omere made lyes,
 Feynyng in hys poetries,
 And was to Grekes favorable ;
 Therfor held he hyt but fable. 390
 Tho saugh I stonde on a pilere,
 That was of tynned yren clere,
 That Latyn poete Virgile,
 That bore hath up longe while
 The fame of pius Eneas.

¹ Statius had been erroneously called a native of Toulouse by Jante, *Purgatorio*, xxi. 88. ² Cf. *Inferno*, iv. 88-90. ³ Dares Phrygius and Dictys Creteusis. ⁴ Cf. *Troilus and Cryseyde*, i. 394 Guido de Colonna. ⁵ Geoffrey of Monmouth.

And next hym on a piler was,
 Of coper,¹ Venus clerke, Ovide,
 That hath ysowen wonder wide
 The grete god of loves name.
 And ther he bare up wel hys fame, 400
 Upon this piler also hye,
 As I hyt myght see with myn ye :
 For-why this halle of whiche I rede
 Was woxen on high, the length and brede,
 Wel more, be a thousande dele,
 Than hyt was erst, that saugh I wel.

Thoo saugh I on a piler by,
 Of yren wroght ful sturnily,
 The grete poete, daun Lucan,
 And on hys shuldres bare up than, 410
 As high as that I myghte see,
 The fame of Julius, and Pompe.
 And by him stoden alle these clerkes,
 That writen of Romes myghty werkes,
 That gif I wolde her names telle,
 Alle to longe most I dwelle.

And next him on a piler stooode,
 Of soulfre, lyke as he were woode,
 Daun Claudian,² the sothe to telle,
 That bare up the fame of helle, 420
 Of Pluto, and of Proserpyne,
 That quene ys of the derke pyne.

What shulde I more telle of this ?

¹ Copper was the metal of Venus. ² Claudianus wrote *De Rapto Proserpine*. Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 14,568.

The halle was al ful, ywis,
Of hem that writen al of the olde gestes,
As ben on trees rokes nestes ;
But hit a ful confuse matere
Were al the gestes for to here,
That they of write, and how they hight.
But while that I beheld thys syght, 430
I herd a noyse aprochen blyve,
That ferd as been ¹ doon in an hive,
Agen her tyme of oute fleyinge ;
Ryght suche a maner murmurynge,
For al the world hyt semede me.

Tho gan I loke aboute and see,
That ther come entryng into the halle,
A ryght grete companye withalle,
And that of sondry regiouns,
Of alles-kynnes condiciouns, 440
That duelle in erthe under the mone,
Pore and ryche. And also sone
As they were come into the halle,
They gonne down on knees falle,
Before this ilke noble quene,
And seyde, "Graunte us, lady shene,
Eche of us of thy grace a bone !"
And somme of hem she grauntede sone,
And somme she wernede ² wel and faire ;
And somme she grauntede the contraire 450
Of her axying outterly.
But this I sey yow trewely,

¹ Bees. ² Refused.

What her cause was, I nyste.
 For thise folke ful wel y-wiste,
 They hadde good fame eche deserved,
 Although they were diversely served.
 Ryght as her suster, dame Fortune,
 Ys wonte to serven in comune.

Now herke how she gan to paye
 'That gonne her of her grace praye, 460
 And ryght lo, al thys companye
 Seyden sooth, and noght a lye.

"Madame," quod they, "we be
 Folke that here besechen the,
 That thou graunte us now good fame,
 And let our werkes han that name.
 In ful recompensacioun
 Of good werkes, give us good renoun."

"I werne yow hit," quod she, anon,
 "Ye gete of me good fame noon, 470
 Be God ! and therfore goo your wey."

"Allas," quod they, "and welaway !
 Telle us what may your cause be."

"For me lyst hyt noght," quod she,
 "No wyght shal speke of yow. ywis,
 Good ne harme, ne that ne this."
 And with that worde she gan to calle
 Her messangere that was in halle,
 And bad that he shulde faste goon,
 Upon payne to be blynde anon, 480
 For Eolus, the god of wynde,
 In Trace there ye shul him finde,

And bid him bring his clarioun,
 That is ful dyvers of his soun,
 And hyt is cleped Clere Laude,
 With which he wonte is to hiraude
 Hem that me list ypreised be :
 And also bid him how that he
 Brynge his other clarioun,
 That highte Sclaundre in every toun, 490
 With which he wonte is to diffame
 Hem that me liste, and do hem shame."

This messenger gan faste goon,
 And founde where in a cave of stoon,¹
 In a contree that highte Trace,
 This Eolus, with harde grace,
 Helde the wyndes in distresse,
 And gan hem under him to presse,
 That they gonne as beres rore,
 He bonde and pressed hem so sore.² 500

This messanger gan faste crie,
 " Ryse up," quod he, " and faste hye,
 Til that thou at my lady be ;
 And take thy clarioun eke with the,
 And spede the forth." And he anon
 Toke to a man that highte Tritoun,
 Hys clarions to bere thoo,
 And lete a certeyn wynde to goo,
 And blewe so hydously and hye,
 That hyt ne lefte not a skye 510
 In alle the welkene longe and brode.

¹ Cf. *De l'et de Blaunche*, l. 163. ² This is an imitation of a passage in the *Æneid*, i. 52.

This Eolus no where abode,
Til he was come to Fames fete,
And eke the man that Triton hete;¹
And ther he stode as stille as stoon.

And herwithal ther come anoon

Another huge companye

Of goode folke and gunne crie,

“Lady, graunte us good fame

And lat oure werkes han that name,

520

Now in honour of gentillesse,

And, also God your soule blesse!

For we han wel deserved hyt,

Therefore is ryght that we ben wel quyt.”

“As thryve I,” quod she, “ye shal faylle,

Good werkes shal yow noght availle

To have of me good fame as now.

But wete ye what? I graunte yow,

That ye shal have a shrewde² fame,

And wikkyd loos³ and worse name,

530

Though ye good loos have wel deserved.

Now goo your wey, for ye be served;

Have doon! Eolus, let see!

Take forth thy trumpe anon,” quod she;

“That is ycleped Sklaunder lyght,

And blow her loos, that every wight

Speke of hem harme and shrewedenesse,

In stede of good and worthynesse.

For thou shalt trumpe alle the contraire

Of that they han don wel or fayre.”

540

¹ Was named. ² Cursed. ³ Celebrity (Lat. *laus*).

Allas, thought I, what adventures
 Han these sory creatures,
 For they amonges al the pres,
 Shul thus be shamed gilteles !
 But what ! hyt moste nedes be.

What dide this Eolus, but he
 Toke out hys blake trumpe of bras,
 That fouler than the Devel was,
 And gan this trumpe for to blowe,
 As al the worlde shuld overthrowe.
 That thurghout every regioun
 Wente this foule trumpes soun,
 As swifte as pelet out of gonne,
 Whan fire is in the poudre ronne.
 And suche a smoke gan out-wende,
 Out of his foule trumpes ende,
 Blak, bloo, grenyssh, swarte, rede,
 As doth where that men melte lede,
 Loo, alle on high fro the tuelle !¹

55a

And therto oo thing saugh I welle,
 That the ferther that hit ran,
 The gretter wexen hit began,
 As dooth the ryver from a welle,
 And hyt stank as the pitte of helle.
 Allas, thus was her shame yronge,
 And giltelesse, on every tonge.

56c

Tho come the thridde companye,
 And gunne up to the dees to hye,
 And doun on knes they fille anoon,

¹ Funnel.

And seyde, “We ben everychoon 570

Folke that han ful truely

Deservede fame ryghtfully,

And praye yow hit mot be knowe

Ryght as hit is, and forth y-blowe.”

“I graunte,” quod she, “for me leste

That now youre good werkes be wiste ;

And yet ye shul han better loos,

In dispite of alle your foos,

Than worthy is, and that anoon :

Late now,” quod she, “thy trumpe goon, 580

Thou Eolus, that is so blake ;

And out thyn other trumpe take

That highte Laude, and blowe yt soo

That thugh the worlde her fame goo,

Esely and not to faste,

That hyt be knowen atte laste.”

“Ful gladly, lady myn,” he seyde ;

And oute hys trumpe of golde he brayde

Anoon, and set hyt to his mouthe,

And blew it est, and west, and southe, 590

And northe, as lowde as any thunder,

That every wight hath of hit wonder,

So brode hyt ran or than hit stynte.

And, certes, al the breth that wente

Out of his trumpes mouthe smelde

As men a potte ful of bawme¹ helde

Amonge a basket ful of roses ;

This favour dide he til her loses.²

¹ Balm. To their praises.

And ryght with this I gan aspye,
 Ther come the ferthe companye, —
 But certeyn they were wonder fewe, —
 And gunne stonden in a rewe,
 And seyden, “ Certes, lady bryghte,
 We han doon wel with al our myghte,
 But we ne kepen have no fame.
 Hide our werkes and our name,
 For Goddys love ! for certes we
 Han certeyn doon hyt for bounte,¹
 And for no maner other thinge.”

60a

“ I graunte yow alle your askynge,”
 Quod she ; “ let your werkes be dede.”

61a

With that aboute I clywe² myn hede,
 And saugh anoon the fifte route
 That to this lady gunne loute,³
 And doun on knes anoon to falle ;
 And to hir thoo besoughten alle,
 To hiden her goode werkes eke,
 And seyden, they geven noght a leke
 For no fame, ne suche renoun ;
 For they for contemplacioun,
 And Goddes love, hadde y-wrought,
 Ne of fame wolde they nought.

62a

“ What ? ” quod she, “ and be ye woode ?⁴
 And wene ye for to doo goode,
 And for to have of that no fame ?
 Have ye dispite to have my name ?
 Nay, ye shul lyen everychoon !

¹ Goodness. ² Turned. ³ Bow. ⁴ Mad.

Blowe thy trumpes and that anoon,”

Quod she, “thou Eolus yhote,¹

And rynge this folkes werkes be note, 630

That alle the worlde may of hyt here.”

And he gan blowe hir loos so clere,

In his golden clarioun,

That thurgh the worlde wente the soun,

Also kenely, and eke so softe,

But atte last hyt was on lofte.

Thoo come the sexte companye,

And gunne fast on Fame crie.

Ryght verraly in this manere

They seyden: “Mercy, lady dere! 640

To telle certeyn as hyt is,

We han doon neither that ne this,

But ydel al oure lyfe ybe.

But, natheles, yet preye we,

That we mowe han as good fame,

And gret renoun and knowen name,

As they that han doon noble gestes,

And acheved all her lestes,²

As wel of love as other thyng;

Alle³ was us never broche ne rynge, 650

Ne elles nought from wymmen sent;

Ne ones in her herte yment,

To make us oonly frendly chere,

But myghte temen⁴ us upon bere,

Yet lat us to the peple seme

Suche as the worlde may of us deme

¹ Named. ² Desires. Although. ⁴ Witness (Fr. *témoin*)

That wommen loven us for wode.¹
 Hyt shal doon us a moche goode,
 And to our herte as moche awaylle
 The countrepese, ese, and travaylle, 660
 As we had wonne hyt with labour;
 For that is dere boght honour,
 At regard of oure grete ese.
 And yet thou most us more plese;
 Let us be holden, eke therto,
 Worthy, wise, and goode also,
 And riche, and happy unto love.
 For Goddes love that sit above,
 Thogh we may not the body have
 Of wymmen, yet, so God yow save! 670
 Leet men gliwe² on us the name;
 Sufficeth that we han the fame."

"I graunte," quod she, "be my trouthe!
 Now, Eolus, withouten slouthe,
 Take out thy trumpe of golde," quod she,
 "And blow as they han axed me,
 That every man wene hem at ese,
 Though they goon in ful badde lese."³
 This Eolus gan hit so blowe,
 That thurgh the worlde hyt was yknowe. 680
 Thoo come the seventh route anoon.
 And fel on knees everychoon,
 And seyde, "Lady, graunte us sone
 The same thing, the same bone,
 That thise nexte folke han doon."

¹ Madly. ² Fasten. ³ Bondage (leash).

“ Fy on yow,” quod she, “ everychoon !
 Ye maisty ¹ swyne, ye ydel wrechhes,
 Ful of roten slowe techches ! ²
 What ? false theves ! or ye wolde
 Be famous good, and nothing nolde 690
 Deserve why, ne never ye roughte !
 Men rather yow hangen oughte !
 For ye be lyke the swynte ³ catte,
 That wolde have fissh ; but wastow whatte ?
 He wolde nothings wete his clowes.
 Yvel thrifte come to your jowes,
 And eke to myn gif I hit graunte,
 Or do yow favour yow to avaunte !
 Thou Eolus, thou kynge of Trace !
 Goo, blowe this folke a sory grace,” 700
 Quod she, “ anoon ; and wostow how
 As I shal telle ryghte now.
 Sey, ‘ These ben that wolden honour
 Have, and do noskynnes ⁴ labour,
 Ne doo no good, and yet han lawde ;
 And that men wende that bele Isawde ⁵
 Ne could hem noght of love werne ; ⁶
 And yet she that grynt at a querne ⁷
 Ys alle to good to ese her herte.’ ”

This Eolus anoon up sterte, 710
 And with his blake clarioun
 He gan to blasen out a soun,
 As lowde as beloweth wynde in helle.

¹ Fat (Ger. *mast*, fattened with mast). ² Blotches. ³ Squeamish. ⁴ No sort of. ⁵ That is, she of the romance of *Tristrem*. Cf. *Entrlement of Foules*, l. 290. ⁶ Refuse. ⁷ Hand-mill.

And eke therwith, sothe to telle,
 This sounne was so ful of japes,
 As ever mowes¹ were in apes.
 And that went al the worlde aboute,
 That every wight gan on hem shoute,
 And for to lawgh as they were wode;
 Such game fonde they in her hode.²

720

Tho come another companye,
 That had ydoon the trayterye,
 The harme, the grete wikkednesse,
 That any herte kouthe gesse;
 And prayed her to han good fame,
 And that she nolde doon hem no shame,
 But geve hem loos and good renoun,
 And do hyt blowe in a clarioun.
 "Nay, wis!" quod she, "hyt were a vice;
 Al be ther in me no justice,
 Me ne lyste not doo hyt nowe,
 Ne this nyl I graunte yowe."

730

Tho come ther lepyng in a route,
 And gunne choppen³ al aboute
 Every man upon the crowne,
 That alle the halle gan to sowne,
 And seyden, "Lady, leefte and dere,
 We ben suche folkes as ye mowe here.
 To telie al the tale aryght,
 We ben shrewes⁴ every wyght,
 And han delyte in wikkednes,

740

¹ Mouths, *i. e.*, contortions. ² So were they deluded. Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, ll. 586, 3143, 6052, 7984; and *Troilus and Cryseydes* v. 469. ³ Strike ⁴ Rascals.

As goode folke han in godenes ;
 And joye to be knowen shrewes,
 And ful of vices and wikked thewes ;¹
 Wherefore we prayen yow a rowe,
 That oure fame suche be knowe,
 In alle thing ryght as hit ys."

"I graunte hyt yow," quod she, "ywis.
 But what art thou that seyst this tale,
 That werest on thy hose a pale,²
 And on thy tipet suche a belle?"

750

"Madame," quod he, "sothe to telle,
 I am that ylke shrewe, ywis,
 That brende the temple of Ysidis³
 In Athenes, loo, that citee."

"And wherfor didest thou so?" quod she.

"By my thrift," quod he, "madame,
 I wolde fayn han hadde a fame,
 As other folke hadde in the toun,

Alle-though they were of grete renoun

760

For her vertue and her thewes,¹

Thought I, as gret fame han shrewes —

Though hit be noght⁴ — for shrewdenesse

As goode folke han for godenesse ;

And sith I may not have that oon,

'That other nyl I noght forgoon.

And for to gette of fames hire,

The temple set I alle a-fire.

¹ Moral qualities. ² Stripe. ³ Chaucer seems to refer to the burning of the temple of Diana at Ephesus by Herostratus on the night of the birth of Alexander the Great. Diana was the goddess of the moon. Isis was the same in Egypt. ⁴ Naughty.

Now doon our loos be blowed swithe,
 As wisly be thou ever blythe." 77c
 " Gladly," quod she. " Thow Eolus,
 Herestow not what this folke prayen us ? "
 " Madame, yis, ful wel," quod he,
 " And I wil trumpen hit, *parde !* "
 And toke his blake trumpe faste,
 And gan to puffen and to blaste,
 Til hyt was at the worldes ende.

With that I gan aboute wende,¹
 For oon that stooode ryght at my bake,
 Me thoughte goodely to me spake, 78c
 And seyde, " Frende, what is thy name ?
 Artow come hider to han fame ? "
 " Nay, forsothe, frende ! " quod I ;
 " I cam noght hyder, *graunt mercy !*
 For no suche cause, by my hede !
 Sufficeth me, as I were dede,
 That no wight have my name in honde.²
 I wote my-self best how I stonde,
 For what I drye ³ or what I thynke, —
 I wil my selfe alle hyt drynke, 79c
 Certeyn for the more parte,
 As ferforthe as I kan ⁴ myn arte."
 " But what doost thou here ? " quod he.
 Quod I, " That wyl I tellen the,
 The cause why I stonde here.
 Somme newe tydyngis for to lere,
 Somme newe thinge, I not ⁵ what,

¹ Turn. ² Traduce me. ³ Suffer. ⁴ Know. ⁵ Know not

Tydynges other this or that,
 Of love, or suche thynges glade.
 For, certeynly, he that me made 800
 'To come hyder, seyde me
 I shulde bothe here and se,
 In this place, wonder thynges ;
 But these be no suche tydynges
 As I mene of." "Noo?" quod he.
 And I answerede, "Noo, *parde!*
 For wel I wote ever yit,
 Sith that first I hadde wit,
 That somme folke han desired fame
 Diversly, and loos and name ; 810
 But certeynly I nyste howe,
 Ne where that Fame duelled, er now ;
 And eke of her descripcioun,
 Ne also her condicioun,
 Ne the ordre of her dome,¹
 Unto the tyme I thidder come."

"Why than, loo, be these tydynges,
 That thou now hider brynges,
 That thou hast herde?" quod he to me ;
 "But now, no fors ; for wel I se 820
 What thou desirest for to lere.²
 Come forth, and stonde no lenger here,
 And I wil the, withouten drede,
 In suche another place lede,
 Ther thou shalt here many oon."

Tho gan I forthe with hym to goon,

¹ Judgment. ² Learn.

Oute of the castel, sothe to seye.
 Tho saugh I stond in a valeye,
 Under the castel faste by,
 An house, that domus Dedaly,¹ 830
 That Laboryntus ycleped ys,
 Nas made so wonderlych ywis,
 Ne half so queyntlyche ywrought.
 And evermo, so swyft as thought,
 This queynte hous aboute wente,
 That nevermo stille hyt stente.
 And theroute come so grete a noyse,
 That had hyt stonde upon Oyse,²
 Men myght hyt han herd esely
 To Rome, I trowe sikerly. 840
 And the noyse which I have herde,
 For alle the world right so hyt ferde,
 As dooth the rowtynge of the stoon,
 That from thengyne³ ys leten goon.
 And al thys hous of whiche I rede⁴
 Was made of twigges, salwe,⁵ rede
 And green eke, and somme weren white,
 Swiche as men to these cages thwite,⁶
 Or maken of these panyers,
 Or elles hattes or dossers ;⁷ 850
 That for the swough and for the twygges,
 This house was also ful of gygges,⁸
 And al so ful eke of chirkynges,⁹

¹ The labyrinth said to have been made by Dædalus for Minos
Metamorphoses, viii. 155. ² The river Oise, in northern France
 A machine for hurling stones in war. ⁴ Tell. ⁵ Oziers. ⁶ Whittle
 Baskets for the back. ⁸ Chatterings. ⁹ Chirpings.

And of many other werkynges ;
 And eke this hous hath of entrees ¹
 As feeles ² as of leves ben on trees
 In somer, whan they grene ben,
 And on the rove ³ men may yet seen
 A thousand holes, and wel moo,
 To leten wel the soun, oute goo.

860

And eke be day in every tyde
 Been al the dores opened wide,
 And be nyght echoon unshette,
 Ne porter ther is noon to lette ⁴
 No maner tydynges in to pace ;
 Ne never rest is in that place,
 That hit nys filde ful of tydynges,
 Other loude or of whisprynges.
 And over alle the houses angles
 Ys ful of rounynges ⁵ and of jangles,
 Of werres, of pes, of mariages,
 Of restes, of labour of viages,
 Of aboode, of deeth, of lyfe,
 Of leve, of hate, acorde, of stryfe,
 Of loos, of lore, and of wynnynge,
 Of hele, of sekeness, of bildynges,
 Of faire wyndes, of tempestes,
 Of qwalme of folke, and eke of bestes ;
 Of dyvers transmutacions,
 Of estates and eke of regions ;
 Of trust, of drede, of jelousye,
 Of witte, of wynnynge, of folve ;

870

880

¹ Entrances. ² Many. ³ Roof. ⁴ Hinder. ⁵ Whisperings.

Of plente, and of grete famyne,
 Of chepe,¹ of derthe, and of ruyne ;
 Of good or mysgovernment,
 Of fire, and of dyvers accident.

And loo, thys hous of which I write,
 Syker ² be ye, hit nas not lyte ; ³

For hyt was sixty myle of lengthe,
 Alle was the tymber of no strengthe ;

89c

Yet hyt is founded to endure

While that hit lyst to Aventure,⁴ —

That is the moder of tydynges,

As the see of welles and of sprynges, —

And hyt was shapen lyke a cage.

“ Certys,” quod I, “ in al myn age,
 Ne saugh I suche a hous as this.”

And as I wondrede me, ywys,⁵

Upon this hous, tho war was I

How that myn egle, faste by,

90a

Was perched hye upon a stoon ;

And I gan streghte to hym goon,

And seyde thus : “ I preye the

That thou a while abide me

For goddis love, and lete me seen

What wondres in this place been ;

For yit paraventure I may lere

Somme good theron, or sumwhat here

That leef me were, or that I wente.”

“ Petre ! that is myn entente,”

91a

Quod he to me ; “ therfore I duelle,

¹ Market. ² Sure. ³ Little. ⁴ It was subject to Chance Truly

But certeyn oon thyng I the telle,
 That, but I bringe the therinne,
 Ne shalt thou never kunne gynne ¹
 To come into hyt, out of doute,
 So faste hit whirleth, lo, aboute.
 But sithe that Jovys, of his grace,
 As I have seyde, wol the solace
 Fynally with these thinges,
 Unkouth ² syghtes and tydynges, 920
 To passe with thyn hevynesse,
 Suche routhe hath he of thy distresse, --
 That thou suffrest debonairly,
 And wost thy-selfen outtirly,
 Disesperat ³ of alle blys,
 Syth that Fortune hath made amys
 The frot ⁴ of al thyn hertes reste
 Languish and eke in poynt to breste, --
 That he thugh hys myghty merite,
 Wol do than ⁵ ese, al be hyt lyte, ⁶ 930
 And gaf in expresse commaundement,
 To whiche I am obedient,
 To further the with al my myght,
 And wisse ⁷ and teche the aryght,
 Where thou maist most tydynges here,
 Shaltow here anoon many oon lere."

With this worde he ryght anoon
 Hente me up bytwexe his toon, ⁸
 And at a wyndowe yn me broghte,

¹ Know contrivance. ² Unknown. ³ In despair (Fr. *désespéré*)
 Fruit. ⁴ Thee an. ⁵ Little. ⁶ Inform. ⁷ Toes.

That in this hous was, as me thoghte, — 940
 And therwithalle me thought hit stente,
 And no thinge hyt aboute wente, —
 And me set in the flore adoun.
 But whiche a congregacioun ¹
 Of folke, as I saugh rome aboute,
 Some within and some withoute,
 Nas never seen, ne shal ben eft,²
 That, certes, in the worlde nys left
 So many formed be Nature,
 Ne dede so many a creature,
 That wel unnethe ³ in that place
 Hadde I a fote brede of space ;
 And every wight that I saugh there
 Rounede ⁴ in others ere
 A newe tydyng prevely,
 Or elles tolde alle openly
 Ryght thus, and seyde, “ Nost not thou
 That ys betyde, late or now ? ”
 “ No,” quod he, “ telle me what.”
 And than he tolde hym this and that, 960
 And swore therto that hit was sothe, —
 “ Thus hath he sayde,” and “ Thus he dothe,”
 And “ Thus shal hit be,” and “ Thus herde I
 seye,”
 “ That shal be founde,” “ That dare I leye.”
 That alle the folke that ys a lyve
 Ne han the kunnyng to discryve

¹ Compare ll. 830 and 944 with *Inferno*, iii. 52, 55, etc. ² Again after this. ³ Scarcely. ⁴ Whispered.

The thinges that I herde there,
 What aloude, and what in ere.
 But al the wonder most was this :
 Whan oon had herde a thinge, ywis, 970
He come forthright to another wight,
 And gan him tellen, anon ryght,
 The same thyng that him was tolde,
 Or hyt a forlonge way¹ was olde,
 But gan sommewhat for to eche²
 Tho this tydyng in this speche
 More than hit ever was.

And nat so sone departed nas
 That he fro him, thoo he ne mette
 With the thridde ; and, or he lette 980
Any stounde,¹ he told hym als ;
 Were the tydyng sothe or fals,
 Yit wolde he telle hyt natheles,
 And evermo with more encres
 Than yt was erst. Thus north and southe
 Went every mothe³ fro mouthe to mouthe,
 And that encresing evermoo,
 As fire ys wont to quyk⁴ and goo
 From a sparke sprongen amys,
 Tille alle a citee brent up ys. 990

And whan that hit was ful yspronge,
 And woxen more on every tonge
 Than ever hit was, and went anoon
 Up to a wyndowe out to goon,
 Or, but hit myghte oute there pace,

¹ Short time. ² Increase (eke). ³ Mite, atom. ⁴ Grow lively.

Hyt gan oute crepe at somme crevace,
And flygh forthe faste for the nones.

And somtyme saugh I thoo, at ones
A lesyng and a sad sothe-sawe,¹
That gonne of aventure thrawe ²
Out to a wyndowe for to pace ;
And, when they metten in that place,
They were achekek bothe two,
And neyther of hem most out goo ;
For other so they gonne crowde,
Til eche of hem gan crien lowde,
“Lat me go first !” “Nay, but let me !

1000

And here I wol ensuren the
Wyth the nones ³ that thou wolt do so,
That I shal never fro the go,
But be thyn oun sworn brother !
We wil us medle ⁴ eche with other,
That no man, be they never so wrothe,
Shal han that on or two, but bothe
At ones, al beside his leve,
Come we a morwe or on eve,
Be we cried or stille y-rouned.” ⁵
Thus saugh I false and sothe, compouned.
Togeder fle for oo tydyng.

1010

Thus out at holes gunne wringe ⁶
Every tydyng streight to Fame ;
And she gan geve eche hys name,
After hir disposicioun,

1020

¹ A lie and an established truth. ² Struggle (throe). ³ Occasion.
⁴ Mix. ⁵ Whispered. ⁶ Squeeze.

And gaf hem eke duracioun,
Some to wexe and wane sone,
As dothe the faire white mone,
And lete hem goon. Ther myght I **seen**
Wenged wondres faste fleen,
Twenty thousand in a route,
As Eolus hem blew aboute.

1030

And, lord ! this hous in alle tymes
Was ful of shipmen and pilgrimes,
With scrippes Bret-ful of lesenges,
Entremedled ¹ with tydynges,
And eke allone be hemselfe.
O, many a thousand tymes twelve
Sough I eke of these pardoners,
Curours, ² and eke messangers,
With boystes ³ crammed ful of lyes,
As ever vessel was with lyes.

1040

And as I alther-fastest ⁴ wente
About, and did al myn entente,
Me for to pleyen and for to lere, ⁵
And eke a tydyng for to here,
That I had herd of somme contre
That shal not now be tolde for me ;
For hit no nede is, redely ;
Folke kan hit synge bet than I.
For alle mote oute, other late or rathe, ⁶
Alle the sheves in the latbe. ⁷

1050

I herde a grete noyse withalle
In a corner of the halle,

¹ Mingled. ² Couriers. ³ Boxes (O. Fr. *boiste*, *box*). ⁴ Fastes,
of all. ⁵ Lere. ⁶ Early. ⁷ Barn.

Ther men of love tydynge tolde,
 And I gan thiderwarde beholde ;
 For I saugh rennynge every wight,
 As fast as that they hadden myght ;
 And everyche criede, " What thing is that ? "
 And somme sayde, " I not never what."
 And whan they were alle on an hepe,
 Tho behynde begunne up lepe, 1060
 And clamben up on other faste,
 And up the noyse an-highen kaste,
 And troden faste on otheres heles,
 And stampe, as men doon after eles.

Atte laste I saugh a man,
 Whiche that I nat,¹ ne kan,
 But he semede for to be
 A man of grete auctorite.²

And therwithalle I abrayde ³
 Cut of my slepe, half afrayde ; 1070
 Remembring welle what I hadde seene,
 And how hye and ferre I hadde beene
 In my goost ; and hadde gret wonder
 Of that the god of thunder
 Hadde let me knowen ; and began to write
 Lyke as yee have herde me endite.
 Wherefore to studye and rede alway,
 I purpose to do day by day.

Thus in dreaming and in game
 Endeth this lytel booke of Fame. 1080

¹ Knew not. ² The remaining lines are from Thynne's edition (1532), whence they came from Caxton's (about 1483). ³ Started.

THE LEGENDE OF GOODE WOMEN.

The Prologue.

A THOUSANDE tymes I have herde telle,
 There ys joy in hevene, and peyne in helle,
 And I acorde wel that it ys so ;
 But, natheles, yet wot I wel also,
 That ther is noon dwellyng in this countree,
 That eythir hath in hevene or helle ybe,
 Ne may of hit noon other weyes witen,¹
 But as he hath herd seyde, or founde it writen ;
 For by assay ther may no man it preve.

But God forbede but men shulde leve 10
 Wel more thing then men han seen with eye !
 Men shal not wenen every thing a lye
 But-yf hymselfe yt seeth, or elles dooth ;
 For, God wot, thing is never the lasse sooth,
 Thogh every wight ne may it not ysee.
 Bernarde, the monke, ne saugh nat alle, *par-*
*de !*²

Than mote we to bokes that we fynde, —
 Thurgh which that olde thinges ben in mynde, —
 And to the doctrine of these olde wyse,³
 Geve credence, in every skylful⁴ wise, 20
 That tellen of these olde apprevd stories,
 Of holynesse, of regnes,⁵ of victories,

¹ Know. ² Cf. *Hamlet*, act i., sc. 5, l. 166: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." ³ Wise ones. ⁴ Reasonable. ⁵ Kingdoms.

Of love, of hate, and other sondry thynges,
 Of whiche I may not maken rehersynges.
 And yf that olde bokes were away,
 Ylorne were of remembraunce the key.
 Wel ought us, thanne, honouren and beleve
 These bokes, there we han noon other preve.

And as for me, though that I konne but
 lyte,¹

On bokes for to rede I me delyte, 30
 And to hem give I feyth and ful credence,
 And in myn herte have hem in reverence
 So hertely, that ther is game noon
 That fro my bokes maketh me to goon,
 But yt be seldom on the holy day,
 Save, certeynly, whan that the monethe of May
 Is comen, and that I here the foules ² synge,
 And that the floures gynnen for to sprynge, —
 Fairewel my boke, and my devocioun !

Now have I thanne suche a condicioun,³ 40
 That of alle the floures in the mede,
 Thanne love I most thise floures white and
 rede,

Suche as men callen daysyes in her toun.
 To hem have I so grete affeccioun,
 As I seyde erst, whanne comen is the May,
 That in my bed ther daweth me no day,
 That I nam uppe and walkyng in the mede,
 To seen this floure agein ⁴ the sonne sprede,
 Whan it up rysith erly by the morwe ;

¹ Know but little. ² Birds. ³ Temperament. ⁴ Towards

That blisful sight softneth al my sorwe, 50
 So glad am I, whan that I have presence
 Of it, to doon it alle reverence,
 As she that is of alle floures flour,
 Fulfilled of al vertue and honour,
 And evere ilike faire, and fresshe of hewe.
 And I love it, and evere ylike newe,
 And ever shal, til that myn herte dye ;
 Al swere I nat — of this I wol nat lye —
 Ther lovede no wight hotter in his lyve.

And, whan that hit ys eve, I renne blyve, 60
 As sone as evere the sonne gynneth weste,¹
 To seen this flour, how it wol go to reste,
 For fere of nyght, so hateth she derkenesse !
 Hire chere² is pleynty sprad in the bright-
 nesse

Of the sonne, for ther yt wol unclose.
 Allas, that I ne had Englyssh, ryme or prose,
 Suffisant this flour to preyse aryght !
 But helpeth ye that han konnyng³ and myght,
 Ye lovers, that kan make of sentement ;
 In this case oghten ye be diligent 70
 To forthren me somewhat in my labour,
 Whethir ye ben with the "leef" or with the
 "flour,"

For wel I wot, that ye han herbiforne
 Of makynge ropen,⁴ and lad away the corne ;
 And I come after, glenyng here and there,
 And am ful glad yf I may fynde an ere

¹ To west. ² Face. ³ Knowledge. ⁴ Reaped of poetry.
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Of any goodly word that ye han left.
 And thogh it happen me rehercen eft ¹
 That ye han in your fresshe songes sayede,
 Forbereth me, and beth not evele apayede,² 80
 Syn that ye see I do yt in the honour
 Of love, and eke in service of the flour
 Whom that I serve as I have witte or myght.
 She is the clerenesse and the verray lyght,
 That in this derke worlde me wynt ³ and ledyth.
 The hert in-with my sorwful brest yow ⁴ dredith,
 And loveth so sore, that ye ben verrayly
 The maistresse of my witte, and nothing I.
 My worde, my werkes, ys knyht so in youre
 bond

That as an harpe obeieth to the hond, 90
 That maketh it soune after his fyngerynge.
 Ryght so mowe ye oute of myn herte bringe
 Swich vois, ryght as yow lyst, to laughe or
 pleyne ;

Be ye myn gide, and lady sovereyne.
 As to my erthely god, to yowe I calle,
 Bothe in this werke, and in my sorwes alle.

But wherfore that I spake to give credence
 To olde stories, and doon hem reverence,
 And that men mosten more thyng beleve 99
 Then they may seen at eighe or elles preve,
 That shal I seyn, whanne that I see my tyme
 I may nat all attones speke in ryme.
 My besy gost, that trusteth alwey newe,

¹ Again. ² Dissatisfied. ³ Turneth. ⁴ You, i. e., the flower

To seen this flour so yong, so fresshe of hewe,
 Constreynede me with so gledy¹ desire,
 That in myn herte I feele yet the fire,
 That made me to ryse er yt wer day,
 And this was now the firste morwe of May,
 With dredful hert, and glad devocioun
 For to ben at the resurreccioun 110
 Of this flour, whan that yt shulde unclose
 Agayne² the sonne, that roos as rede as rose,
 That in the brest was of the beste,³ that day,
 That Agenores doghtre⁴ ladde away.
 And doune on knes anoon ryght I me sette,
 And as I koude, this fresshe flour I grette,
 Knelyng alwey, til it unclosed was,
 Upon the smale, softe, swote gras,
 That was with floures swote enbrouded al,
 Of swich swetnesse, and swich odour over-al,
 That for to speke of gomme, or herbe, or tree,
 Comparisoun may noon ymaked be ; 122
 For yt surmounteth pleylnly alle odoures,
 And of riche beaute alle floures.
 Forgeten hadde the erthe his pore estate
 Of wyntir, that him naked made and mate,⁵
 And with his swerd of colde so sore greved ;
 Now hath thatempre sonne alle that releved
 That naked was, and clad yt new agayne.
 The smale foules, of the sesoun fayne, 130
 That of the panter⁶ and the nette ben scaped,

¹ Burning (glede, a burning coal). Towards. ³ Taurus. ⁴ That
 Europa. ⁵ Dejected. ⁶ Snare (Fr *châtière*, net).

Upon the foulere, that hem made awhaped¹
 In wynter, and distroyed hadde hire broode,
 In his dispite hem thoghte yt did hem goode
 To synge of hym, and in hir songe dispise
 The foule cherle, that, for his coveytise,
 Had hem betrayed with his sophistrye.

This was hire songe, "*The foweler we deffye,
 And al his crafte.*" And somme songen clere
 Layes of love, that joye it was to here, 14c
 In worshippinge and in preysing of hir make ;
 And, for the newe blisful somers sake,
 Upon the braunches ful of blosmes softe,
 In hire delyt, they turned hem ful ofte,
 And songen, "*Blessed be Seynt Valentyne !³
 For on his day I chees yow to be myne,
 Withouten repentyng, myne herte swete !*"
 And therewithalle hire bekens gonnen meete,
 Yeldyng honour and humble obeysaunces
 To love, and diden hir othere observaunces 15c
 That longeth onto love, and to nature ;
 Construeth that as yow lyst, I do no cure.

And thoo that hadde doon unkyndenesse,⁴ —
 As dooth the tydif,⁵ for newfangelnesse, —
 Besoghte mercy of hire trespassynge,
 And humbly songe hire repentyng,
 And sworn on the blosmes to be trewe,
 So that hire makes wolde upon hem rewe,
 And at the laste maden hire acorde.

¹ Confounded. ² Their mates. ³ Cf. *Parlement of Foules* l. 43.
 Unnatural deeds. ⁵ Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 15,424

Al founde they Daunger¹ for a tyme a lord, 160
 Yet Pitee, thurgh his stronge gentil myght,
 Forgaf, and made mercy passen ryght
 Thurgh Innocence, and ruled Curtesye.
 But I ne clepe yt nat innocence folye,²
 Ne fals pitee, for “vertue is the mene,”
 As Ethike³ seith, in swich maner I mene.
 And thus thise foweles, voide of al malice,
 Acordeden to love, and laften vice
 Of hate, and songe alle of oon acorde,
 “*Welcome, Somer, oure governour and lorde.*”

And Zepherus and Flora gentilly 171
 Gaf to the floures, softe and tenderly,
 Hire swoote breth, and made hem for to sprede,
 As god and goddesse of the floury mede.
 In whiche me thoght I myghte, day by day,
 Dwellen alwey, the joly monyth of May,
 Withouten slepe, withouten mete or drynke.
 Adoune ful softly I gan to synke,
 And lenynge on myn elbowe and my syde,
 The longe day I shoope⁴ me for tabide 180
 For nothing ellis, and I shal nat lye,
 But for to loke upon the daysie,
 That men by resoun wel it calle may
 The daisie, or elles the ye of day,
 The emperice, and floure of floures alle.
 I pray to God that faire mote she falle,

¹ Although they found haughtiness. ² Foolish. ³ Ethics, probably Aristotle's, though the expression is common. Cleobulus of Rhodes is said to have spoken of the “Golden Mean” three centuries before the Stagirite. ⁴ Arranged.

And alle that loven floures, for hire sake !¹
 But, natheles, ne wene nat that I make
 In preysing of the flour agayn the leef,²
 No more than of the corne agayn the sheef :
 For as to me nys lever noon, ne lother,³ 191
 I nam withholden yit with never nother.
 Ne I not⁴ who serveth leef, ne who the flour,
 Wel browken⁵ they her service or labour,
 For this thing is al of another tonne,⁶
 Of olde storye, er swiche thinge was begonne.

Whan that the sonne out of the south gan
 weste,
 And that this floure gan close, and goon to
 reste,
 For derknesse of the nyght, the which she
 dredde,
 Home to myn house full swiftly I me spedde
 To goon to reste, and erly for to ryse, 201
 To seen this floure sprede, as I devyse.
 And in a litel herber⁷ that I have,
 That benched was on turves fressh ygrave,
 I bad men sholde me my couche make ;
 For deyntee of the newe someres sake,
 I bad hem strawen floures on my bed.

Whan I was leyde, and hadde myn eyen hed.⁸
 I fel on slepe, in-with an houre or twoo,
 Me mette⁹ how I lay in the medewe thoo, 210

¹ Lines 152-187 are not found in the MS. marked Gg, 4, 27, in the Cambridge University Library, which is evidently an earlier one than the one followed in the text, Fairfax 16, Bodleian Library, Oxford. ² Cf. l. 72. ³ More loath. ⁴ Know not. ⁵ Enjoy. ⁶ Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 10,219. ⁷ Arbor. ⁸ Hidden. ⁹ Dreamed.

To seen this flour that I love so and drede ;
 And from a fer come walkyng in the mede
 The god of Love, and in his hand a quene,
 And she was clad in real¹ habite grene ;
 A fret² of gold she hadde next her heer,
 And upon that a white crorone she beer,
 With flourouns smale, and, I shal nat lye,
 For al the worlde ryght as a daysye
 Ycorouned ys with white leves lyte,
 So were the flowrouns of hire coroune white ;
 For of oo perle, fyne, oriental, 221
 Hire white coroune was imaked al,
 For which the white coroune above the grene
 Made hire lyke a daysie for to sene,
 Considered eke hir fret of golde above.

Yclothed was this myghty god of Love
 In silke enbrouded, ful of grene greves,³
 In-with a fret of rede rose leves,
 The fresshest syn the worlde was first begonne.
 His gilte here was corowned with a sonne 230
 In stede of golde, for hevynesse and wyghte ;⁴
 Therwith me thoght his face shoon so brighte
 That wel unnethes⁵ myght I him beholde ;
 And in his hand me thoght I saugh him holde
 Twoo firy dartes, as the gledes⁶ rede,
 And aungelyke hys wynges saugh I sprede.
 And, al be that men seyn that blynd ys he,
 Algate me thoghte that he myghte se ;

¹ Regal. ² Ornament. ³ Things carved (graven), or groves
⁴ Weight. ⁵ Scarcely. ⁶ Live coals.

For sternely on me he gan byholde,
 So that his loking dooth myn herte colde. 240
 And by the hande he helde this noble quene,
 Corowned with white, and clothed al in grene,
 So womanly, so benigne, and so meke,
 That in this world, thogh that men wolde
 seke,
 Half hire beute shulde men nat fynde
 In creature that formed ys by Kynde.
 And therfore may I seyn, as thynketh me,
 This songe in preysyng of this lady fre.¹

Ballad sung to Alceste.

Hyd, Absalon, thy gilte tressis clere ;
Ester, ley thou thy mekenesse al adoune ; 250
Hyde, Jonathas, al thy frendly manere ;
Penelopee, and Marcia Catoun,²
Make of youre wifhode no comparysoun ;
Hyde ye youre beauties, Ysoude and Eleyne,
My lady comith, that al this may disteyne.³

Thy faire body lat yt nat appere,
Lavyne ;⁴ and thou Lucrese of Rome toune,
And Polixene, that boghten love so dere,
And Cleopatre, with al thy passyoun, 259
Hyde ye your trouthe of love, and your renoun,

¹ MS. Gg, 4, 27, which differs in many lines from the text here given, proves that "this lady fre" was Alceste, who died for Admetus, her husband. Cf. l. 432. ² Marcia, wife of Cato the younger. See Cough's *Plutarch*, iv. 394. ³ Outshine. ⁴ Lavinia, wife of Æneas. Most of these names are taken from Ovid.

*And thou, Tesbe, that hast of love suche peyne,
My lady comith, that al this may disteyne.*

*Hero, Dido, Laudomia, alle yfere,¹
And Phillis, hangyng for thy Demophoun,
And Canace, espied by thy chere,
Ysiphile betrayed with Jasoun,
Maketh of your trouthe neythir boost ne soun,
Nor Ypermystre, or Adriane,² ye tweyne,
My lady cometh, that al thys may dysteyne.*

This balade may ful wel ysongen be, 27c
As I have seyde erst, by³ my lady fre ;
For certeynly al thise mowe nat suffise
To apperen wyth my lady in no wyse.
For as the sonne wole the fire disteyne,
So passeth al my lady sovereyne,
That ys so good, so faire, so debonayre,
I prey to God that ever falle hire faire.
For nadde comfort ben of hire presence,
I hadde ben dede, withouten any defence,
For drede of Loves wordes, and his chere, 28o
As, when tyme ys, hereafter ye shal here.

Behynde this god of Love upon the grene
I saugh comyng of ladyes nientene
In real⁴ habite, a ful esy paas ;
And after hem come of wymen swich a traas,⁵
That syn that God Adam hadde made of
erthe,

¹ Together. ² Ariadne. ³ Concerning. ⁴ Regal. ⁵ Train

The thridde part of mankynde, or the ferthe,
 Ne wende I nat by possibilittee,
 Had ever in this wide worlde ybee; 289
 And trewe of love thise women were echon.

Now wheither was that a wonder thing or
 non,

That ryght anoon, as that they gonne espye
 This flour, which that I clepe the daysie,
 Ful sodeynly they stynten al attones,
 And knelede doune, as it were, for the nones,
 And songen with o vois, "Heel and honour
 To trouthe of womanhede, and to this flour
 That bereth our alder pris in figurynge,¹
 Hire white corowne beryth the witnessynge!"

And with that word, a-compas enviroun, 300
 They setten hem ful softly adoun.
 First sat the god of Love, and syth his quene
 With the white corowne, clad in grene;
 And sithen al the remenaunt by and by,²
 As they were of estaat, ful curteysly,
 Ne nat a worde was spoken in the place,
 The mountaunce of a furlong wey of space.³

I, knelyng by this floure, in good entente
 Aboode,⁴ to knowen what this peple mente,
 As stille as any ston; til at the laste 310
 This god of Love on me hyse eighen caste,
 And seyde, "Who kneleth there?" And I
 answerde

¹ The prize from all of us in a figure. ² Side by side. ³ A short space of time. ⁴ Waited.

Unto his askynge, whan that I it herde,
And seyde, "It am I," and come him nere,¹
And salwed him. Quod he, "What dostow
here,

So nygh myn oune floure, so boldely?

Yt were better worthy trewely

A worme to neghen² ner my flour than thow."

"And why, sire," quod I, "and yt lyke³ yow?"

"For thow," quod he, "art therto nothing
able. 320

Yt is my relyke, digne and delytable,

And thow my foo, and al my folke werrey-
est,⁴

And of myn olde servauntes thow mysseyest,

And hynderest hem, with thy translacioun,

And lettest⁵ folke from hire devocioun

To serve me, and holdest it folye

To serve Love. Thou maist it nat denye,

For in pleyne text, withouten nede of glose,

Thou hast translated the Romaunce of the
Rose,⁶

¹ Nearer. ² Approach. ³ Please. ⁴ Warrest. ⁵ Hinderest.
At this point the MS. we are following omits a long passage which
well worthy of preservation. We quote it from MS. Gg, 4, 27:—

"And thynkest in thyn wit that is ful cole, 258

That he nys but a verray propre fole,

That lovyth paramoures to harde and hote.

Wel wote I therby thow begynnyst dote

As olde folis when her spiryt fayleth,

Thanne blame they folk, and wete nat what hem eayleth.

"Hast thow nat mad in Englys ek the bok

How that Crisseyde Troylis forsok, 265

In schewynge how that women han don mis?

Bit, natheles, answeere me now to this,

Why noldest thou as wel a-seyd goodnes

Of women as thow hast seyde wekednes?

"Was there no good matyr in thyn mynde? 270

That is an heresyge ageins my lawe, 334
 And makest wise folke fro me withdrawe ;¹

Ne in alle thyne bokys ne coudist thou nat fynde
 Sum story of wemen that were goode and trewe ?

" Yis, God wot, sixty bokys olde and newe
 Hast thou thy-self, alle ful of storyis grete
 That bothe Romainys and ek Grekis trete 275
 Of sundery wemen, whiche lyf that they ledde,
 And evere an hunderede goode ageyn on badde.
 This knoweth God and alle clerkes eke
 That usyn sweche materis for to seke.

" What seith Valerye, Titus or Claudyan ? 280
 What seith Jerome agayns Jovynyan ?

How clene maydenys and how trewe wyvys,
 How stedefaste wedewys durynge alle here lyvys
 Tellyth Jerome, and that nat of a fewe,
 But, I dar seyn, an hunderede on a rew, 285
 That it is pete for to rede, and routhe
 The wo that they endure for here trouthe.

For to here love were they so trewe
 That, rather than they wole take a newe,
 They chose to be ded in sundery wyse, 290
 And deiedyn, as the story wele devyse.

And som were brend, and some were cut the hals,
 And some dreynkt, for they woldyn not be fals.
 For alle keped they here maydynhed,
 Or elles wedlok, or here wedewehed. 295

" And this thing was nat kept for holynesse,
 But al for verray vertu and clennesse,
 And for men schulde sette on hem no lak, —
 And yit they were hethene, al the pak,
 That were so sore a-drad of alle schame. 300

" These olde wemen kepte so here name
 That in this world I trowe men schal nat fynde
 A man that coude be so trewe and kynde
 As was the leste woman in that tyde.

" What seyth also the Epistelle of Ovyde² 305
 Of trewe wyves and of here labour ?

What Vincent,³ in his Estorial Myrour ?
 Ek al the world of autours mayst tow here,
 Cristene and hethene, trete of swich matere.

" It nedyth nat al day thus for to endite, 310
 But yet, I seye, what eylyth the to wryte
 The draf of storys and forgete the corn ?

" Be Seynt Venus! of whom that I was born,
 Although thou reneyist hast myn lav,
 As othere olde folis, manye a day, 315
 Thow schalt repente it so that it schal be sene! "

Thanne spak Alceste, the worthyere queene,
 And seyde, " God, right of youre curteseye " . . . 318

¹ This is considered evidence that the text of Chaucer's translation is lost, for the one now extant is not open to the censure here given. *The Heroides*. ² Vincent of Beauvais, a learned Dominican of the thirteenth century.

And of Cresyde thou hast seyde as the lyste,
 That maketh men to wommen lasse triste,
 That ben as trewe as ever was any steel?
 Of thyn answer avise the ryght weel,
 For thogh thou reneyed hast my lay,¹
 As other wrecches han doon many a day,
 By Seynte Venus, that my moder ys,
 If that thou lyve, thou shalt repenten this
 So cruelly, that it shal wele be sene.” 340

Thoo spake this lady,² clothed al in greene,
 And seyde, “God, ryght of youre curtesye,
 Ye moten herken yf he can repye
 Agayns al this that ye have to him meved;
 A god ne sholde nat be thus agreved,
 But of hys deitee he shal be stable,
 And therto gracious and merciable.
 And yf ye nere a god that knowen alle,
 Thanne myght yt be as I yow tellen shalle;
 This man to yow may falsly ben accused, 350
 Ther as by right him oughte ben excused;
 For in youre courte ys many a losengeour,³
 And many a queinte totolere⁴ accusour,
 That tabouren⁵ in youre eres many a swoun,⁶
 Ryght aftir hire ymagynacioun,
 To have youre daliance, and for envie.
 Thise ben the causes, and I shal nat lye,
 Envie ys lavendere⁷ of the court alway;
 For she ne parteth neither nyght ne day,

¹ Denied hast my law. ² Cf. l. 317 in the note above given.
 Liar. ⁴ Artful tattling. ⁵ Drum. ⁶ Noise. ⁷ Gutter or sewer

Out of the house of Cesar, — thus seith
Dante ;¹ 360

Who so that gooth, algate she wol nat wante.

“ And eke, parauntere, for this man ys nyce,
He myghte doon⁸ yt, gessyng no malice ;
For he useth thynges for to make ;⁴
Hym rekketh noght of what matere he take ;
Or him was boden⁵ maken thilke tweye
Of somme persone, and durste yt nat withseye .
Or him repenteth outrely of this.

He ne hath nat doon so greuously amys,
To translaten that olde clerkes writen, 370
As thogh that he of malice wolde editen,
Despite of Love, and had himselfe yt wrought.
This shoolde a ryghtwis lord have in his
thought,

And nat be lyke tirauntes of Lumbardye,
That han no reward but at tyrannye.
For he that kynge or lorde ys naturel,
Hym oghte nat be tiraunt ne crewel,
As is a fermour,⁶ to doon the harme he kan ;
He moste thinke yt is his leege man,
And is his tresour, and his gold in cofre. 380
This is the sentence⁷ of the philosophre :
A kyng to kepe hise leeges in justice,
Withouten doute that is his office.
Al wol he kepe hise lordes in hire degree,
As it ys ryght and skilful⁸ that they bee

¹ *Inferno*, xiii. 64. ² Ignorant. ³ The earlier MS. reads, “ He
may translate a thyngge.” ⁴ That is, to make poetry. ⁵ Bidden
⁶ A farmer (as of the revenues). ⁷ Opinion. ⁸ Reasonable.

Enhaunced and honoured, and most dere,
 For they ben half goddys in this world here.
 Yit mote he doon bothe ryght to poore and
 ryche,

Al be that hire estaate be nat yliche,
 And han of poore folke compassyoun ; 390
 For loo, the gentil kynde ¹ of the lyoun !
 For whan a flye offendith him or biteth,
 He with his tayle away the flye snyteth
 Al esely ; for of his gentrye
 Hym deyneth nat to wreke ² hym on a flie,
 As dooth a curre, or elles another best.

“ In noble corage ³ oughte ben arest, ⁴
 And weyen every thing by equitye,
 And ever have rewarde ⁵ unto his owen de-
 gree.

For, syr, yt is no maistrye for a lorde 400
 To dampne a man, without answeere of worde,
 And for a lorde, that is ful foule to use.
 And it so be, he may hym nat excuse,
 But asketh mercy with a dredeful herte,
 And profereth him, ryght in his bare sherte,
 To ben ryght at your owen jugement,
 Than oght a god, by short avysement,
 Consydre his owne honour, and hys trespass ;
 For syth no caus of dethe lyeth in this caas,
 Yow oghte to ben the lyghter ⁶ merciablen. 410
 Leteth ⁷ youre ire, and beth sumwhat tretablen !

¹ Nature. Revenge. ³ Spirit. ⁴ Restraint. ⁵ Regard.
 More easily. ⁷ Stint.

The man hath served yow of his kunnyng,
And furthred wel youre lawe in his making.¹

“Al be hit that he kan nat wel endite,
Yet hath he made lewde folke delyte
To serve you, in preysinge of your name.
He made the book that hight the ‘Hous of
Fame,’

And eke the ‘Deeth of Blaunche the Duchesse.’
And the ‘Parlement of Foules,’ as I gesse, 419
And al the ‘Love of Palamoun and Arcite’
Of Thebes, thogh the storye ys knowen lyte;²
And many an ympne³ for your haly⁴ dayes,
That highten Balades, Roundels, Virelayes.

“And for to speke of other holynesse,
He hath in proce translated Boece,⁵
And made the ‘Lyfe’ also ‘of Seynt Cecile.’⁶
He made also, goon ys a grete while,
‘Origenes upon the Maudeleyne.’⁷
Hym oughte now to have the lesse peyne,
He hath maade many a lay, and many a
thyng.

430

“Now as ye be a god, and eke a kyng,
I youre Alceste, whilom quene of Trace,
† aske yow this man, ryght of your grace,

¹ Poetizing. The earlier MS. here adds, —

Whil he was yong he kepte youre estat,

I not [know not] wher [whether] he be now a renegat.

² Little. ³ Hymn. ⁴ Holy. ⁵ Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*. The earlier MS. adds a book now unknown (*De Miseria Conditionis Humanæ*), —

And of the “Wrechede Engendrynge of Mankynde,”

As man may in pope Innocent i-fynde.

⁶ The Second Nun’s Tale. ⁷ Origen was a Christian writer of the second century. This work is lost.

That ye him never hurte in al his lyve,
 And he shal sweren to yow, and that blyve,
 He never more shal agilten¹ in this wyse,
 But shal maken, as ye wole devyse,
 Of wommen trewe in lovyng al hire lyf,
 Wher so ye wol, of mayden or of wyf,
 And forthren yow as muche as he mysseyde,
 Or in the Rose, or elles in Creseyde.” 441

The god of Love answered hire anoon,
 “Madame,” quod he, “it is so long agoon
 That I yow knewe so charitable and trewe,
 That never yit, syn that the worlde was newe,
 To me ne founde I better noon than yee ;
 If that ye wolde, save my degree,
 I may ne wol nat werne² your requeste ;
 Al lyeth in yow, — dooth wyth hym as yow
 liste.

I al forgeve withouten lenger space ; 450
 For who-so geveth a gifte or dooth a grace,
 Do it bytyme, his thank ys wel the more,³
 And demeth⁴ ye what he shal do therfore.
 Goo thanke now my lady here,” quod he.

I roos, and doune I sette me on my knee,
 And seyde thus : “Madame, the God above
 Foryelde⁵ yow that the god of Love
 Han maked me his wrathe to forgive,
 And grace so longe for to lyve,
 That I may knowe soothly what ye bee, 460

¹ Offend. ² Refuse. ³ *Bis dat qui cito dat* ; Latin proverb
 Judge. ⁵ Requite.

That han me holpe, and put me in this degree.
 But trewely I wende, as in this cas,
 Naught have agilt,¹ ne doon to love trespas ;
 For-why, ' a trewe man, withouten drede,
 Hath nat to parten with a theves dede ;'
 Ne a trewe lover oghte me not to blame,
 Thogh that I spake a fals love-re som shame.
 They oghte rather with me for to holde,
 For that I of Creseyde wroot or tolde,
 Or of the Rose, — what-so myn auctour
 mente, —

470

Algate, God woot, yt was myn entente
 To forthren trouthe in love, and yt cheryce,
 And to ben war fro falsnesse and fro vice,
 By swiche ensample ; this was my menynges."

And she answerde, " Lat be thyn arguynges,
 For love ne wol nat countrepleted² be
 In ryght ne wrong, and lerne that of me ;
 Thow hast thy grace, and holde the ryght
 therto.

Now wol I seyn what penance thou shalt do
 For thy trespas, and understonde yt here : 48c
 Thou shalt while that thou lyvest, yere by yere
 The moste partye of thy tyme 'spende
 In makyng of a glorious Legende
 Of goode wymmen, maydenes and wyves,
 That weren trew in lovyng al hire lyves,
 And telle of false men that hem bytraien,
That al here lyf ne don nat but asayen

¹ Not to have offended. ² Pleaded against.

How many women they may doon a shame,
 For in your worlde that is now holde a game.
 And thogh the lyke nat a lovee bee, 490
 Speke wel of love ; this penance give I the.
 And to the god of Love I shal so preye,
 That he shal charge his servauntes, by any
 weye,

To forthren thee, and wel thy labour quyte :
 Goo now thy weye, thys penaunce ys but lyte.
 And whan this book ys made, give it the quene
 On my byhalfe, at Eltham, or at Sheene.”¹

The god of Love gan smyle, and than he
 seyde,

“Wostow,” quod he, “wher² this be wyf or
 mayde,

Or queene, or countesse, or of what degre, 500
 That hath so lytel penance given thee,
 That hast deserved sore for to smerte ?
 But ‘pite renneth soone in gentil herte :’
 That maistow seen, she kytheth³ what she ys.”
 And I answerde, “Nay, sire, so have I blys,
 No more, but that I see wel she is good.”

“That is a trewe tale, by myn hood !”

Quod Love, “and thou knowest wel, *pardee*,
 If yt be so that thou avise the.

Hastow nat in a book lyth in thy cheste 510
 The grete goodnesse of the quene Alceste,
 That turned was into a dayesye ?

¹ Lines 496, 497 were not in the earlier version. They are supposed to refer to Anne of Bohemia, married to Richard II. in 1382.
 Whether. ² Showeth.

She that for hire housbonde chees to dye,
 And eke to goon to helle, rather than he,
 And Ercules rescowed hire, *parde*,
 And broght hir out of helle agayne to blys ? ”

And I answerde ageyn, and sayde, “ Yis,
 Now knowe I hire. And is this good Alceste,
 The dayesie, and myn owene hertes reste ?
 Now fele I weel the goodnesse of this wyf. 520
 That both after hir deth, and in hir lyf,
 Hir grete bounte ¹ doubleth hir renoun.
 Wel hath she quyt me myn affeccoun,
 That I have to hire flour the dayesye.
 No wonder ys thogh Jove hire stellyfye,
 As telleth Agaton,² for hire goodenesse,
 Hire white corowne berith of hyt wisesse ;
 For also many vertues hadde shee,
 As smale florouns in hire corowne bee.

“ In remembraunce of hire and in honoure
 Cibella ³ maade the daysye and the floure 531
 Ycrowned al with white, as men may see,
 And Mars gaf to hire corowne reede, *pardec*,
 In stede of rubyes, sette among the white.”

Therwith this queene wex reed for shame a
 lyte,
 Whanne she was preysed so in hire presence.
 Thanne seyde Love, “ A ful grete negligence
 Was yt to the, that ilke tyme thou made,
 ‘ Hyd, Absolon, thy tresses ’ in balade,

¹ Goodness. ² An unknown author. ³ Rhea-Cybele, the goddess
 of fecundity.

That thou forgate hire ¹ in thy songe to sette,
 Syn that thou art so gretly in hire dette, 54¹
 And wost wel that kalender ys shee
 To any woman that wol lover bee :
 For she taught al the crafte of fyne lovyng,
 And namely of wyfhode the lyvyng,
 And al the boundes that she oghte kepe ;
 Thy litel witte was thilke tyme aslepe.
 But now I charge the upon thy lyfe,
 That in thy legende thou make of thys wyfe,
 Whan thou hast other smale ymaade before ;
 And fare now wel, I charge thee namore. 55¹
 But er I goo, thus muche I wole the telle,
 Ne shal no trewe lover come in helle.
 Thise other ladies sittynge here arowe
 Ben in thy balade, yf thou kanst hem knowe,
 And in thy bookes alle thou shalt hem fynde ;
 Have hem in thy Legende now alle in mynde,
 I mene of hem that ben in thy knowyng.
 For here ben twenty thousand moo sittynge
 'Thanne thou knowest, goode wommen alle, 56⁰
 And trewe of love for oght that may byfalle ;

¹ This reference to the omission of Alceste's name from the ballad is not found in the Gg text. It would have been inapt, for in that text the refrain of the ballad reads, "Alceste is here," instead of "My lady comith." The Gg text reads, —

Thanne seyde Love, "A fu. grete negligence
 Was it to the to write onstedefast-nesse
 Of women, sithe thou knowist here goodnesse
 By pref and ek by storyis here by-forn.
 Let be the chaf and writ wel of the corn.
 Why noldist thou have writyn of Alceste
 And latyn Criseide ben a-slepe and rest,
 For of Alceste schulde thy wrytynge be,
 Syn that thou wist that calandir is she
 Of goodnesse, for sche taughte of feyn [glad] lovyng."

Make the metres of hem as the lest ;
 I mot goon home, the sonne draweth west,
 To Paradys, with al thise companye ;
 And serve alwey the fresshe daysye.¹
 At Cleopatre I wole that thou begynne,
 And so forthe, and my love so shalthou
 wynne ;

For lat see now what man that lover be,¹
 Wol doon so stronge a peyne for love as she.
 I wot wel that thou maist nat al yt ryme, 57^c
 That swiche lovers dide in hire tyme ;
 It were to long to reden and to here ;
 Sufficeth me thou make in this manere,
 That thou reherce of al hir lyfe the grete,
 After thise olde auctours lysten for to trete.
 For who-so shal so many a storye telle,
 Sey shortly or he shal to longe dwelle.”

And with that worde my bokes gan I take,
 And ryght thus on my legende gan I make.

*Incipit Legenda Cleopatric, Martiris, Egipti
 Regine.*²

After the deth of Tholome the kyng, 58^o
 That al Egipte hadde in his governyng,
 Regned hys queene Cleopataras ;
 Til on a tyme befel ther swich a cas,³
 That out of Rome was sent a senatour,

¹ Lines 552-565 and 568-577 are not in the Gg text. ² Here be-
 ginneth the legend of Cleopatra, the marty. queen of Egypt. Th
 story is a familiar one, and is found in Plutarch. ³ Chance.

For to conqueren regnes ¹ and honour
 Unto the toune of Rome, as was usaunce,
 To have the worlde at hir obeysaunce,
 And sooth to seye, Antonius was his name.

So fil yt, as Fortune hym oght a shame,
 Whanne he was fallen in prosperitee, 590
 Rebel unto the toune of Rome ys hee.
 And over al this, the suster of Cesar
 He lafte hir falsly, er that she was war,
 And wold algates han another wyf ;
 For which he took with Rome and Cesar strif.

Natheles, forsooth this ilke senatour
 Was a full worthy gentil werreyour,
 And of his deeth it was ful gret damage.
 But Love had brought this man in swich a
 rage,

And him so narwe bounded in his laas,² 600
 Alle for the love of Cleopataras,
 That al the worlde he sette at noo value ;
 Hym thoghte ther was nothing to him so due
 As Cleopataras for to love and serve ;
 Hym roghte³ nat in armes for to sterve
 In the defence of hir and of hir ryght.

This noble queene ek lovede so this knyght,
 Thurgh his desert and for his chivalrye ;
 As certeynly, but-yf that bookes lye,
 He was of persone, and of gentillesse, 610
 And of discrecion, and hardynesse,
 Worthy to any wight that liven may ;

And she was faire as is the rose in May.
 And — to maken shortely is the beste —
 She wax his wif, and hadde him as hir leste.

The weddyng and the feste to devyse,
 To me that have ytake swich emprise,
 Of so many a storye for to make,
 Yt were to longe, lest that I sholde slake
 Of thing that beryth more effecte and charge,
 For men may overlade a shippe or barge. 621
 And forthy,¹ to effect² than wol I skyppe,
 And al the remenaunt I wol let yt slyppe.

Octovyan,³ that woode⁴ was of this dede,
 Shoop him an oost on Antony to lede,
 Al outerly for his destructioun,
 With stoute Romaynes, crewel as lyoun;
 To shippe they wente, and thus I let hem sayle.

Antonius, that was war, and wol nat fayle
 To meten with thise Romaynes, yf he may, 630
 Took eke his rede,⁵ and booth upon a day
 His wyf and he and al hys oost forthe wente
 To shippe anon, no lenger they ne stente,
 And in the see hit happed hem to mete.
 Up gooth the trumpe, and for to shoute and
 shete,⁶

And paynen hem to sette on with the sonne;
 With grisly soune out gooth the grete gonne,⁷
 And hertely they hurtelen al attones,

¹ Therefore. ² The *dénoûment*. ³ The Emperor Augustus Angry. ⁴ Counsel. ⁵ Shoot. ⁶ The mangonel is apparently intended, from the mention of "grete stones," but the use of gun powder in war was at the time of Chaucer's writing forty years old and the passage may contain an anachronism.

And fro the toppe doune cometh the grete
stones.

In gooth the grapenel so ful of crokes, 640

Amonge the ropes, and the sheryng¹ hokes ;

In with the polax preseth he and he ;

Byhynde the maste begynneth he to fle,

And out agayn, and dryveth hym over borde ;

He styngeth hym upon hys speres orde ;²

He rent the sayle with hokes lyke a sithe ;

He bryngeth the cuppe, and biddeth hem be
blithe ;

He poureth pesen upon the hacches slidre,³

With pottes ful of lyme, they goon togidre.

And thus the longe day in fight they spende 650

Til at the last, as every thing hath ende,

Antony is shent,⁴ and put hym to the flyghte,

And al hys folke to-goo, that best goo myghte.

Fleeth ek the queene with al hir purple
sayle,

For strokes which that wente as thik as hayle ;

No wonder was she myght it nat endure.

And whan that Antony saugh that aventure,

“Allas,” quod he, “the day that I was borne!

My worshippe in this day thus have I lorne!”

And for dispeyre out of hys wytte he sterte, 660

And roof⁵ hymself anoon thurghout the herte,

Er that he ferther went out of the place.⁶

¹ Cutting. ² Point. ³ Slippery. ⁴ Discomfited. ⁵ Rived
In truth Antony did not put an end to his life until the following
year. Chaucer is not careful to give exactly all the details, but has
tens to the “application.”

Hys wyf, that koude of Cesar have no grace,
To Egipte is fled, for drede and for distresse.
But herkeneth ye that speken of kyndenesse.

Ye men that falsly sweren many an oothe,
That ye wol dye yf that your love be wroothe,
Here may ye seen of women which a trouthe.
This woful Cleopatre hath made swich routhe,
That ther nys tonge noon that may yt telle. 67c
But on the morowe she wol no lenger dwelle,
But made hir subtil werkmen make a shryne
Of al the rubees and the stones fyne
In al Egipte that she koude espye ;
And put ful the shryne of spicerye,
And let the corps ¹ enbawine ; and forth she
fette ²

This dede corps, and in the shryne yt shette.
And next the shryne a pitte than dooth she
grave,
And alle the serpentis that she myght have,
She put hem in that grave, and thus she
seyde : 68a

“ Now, love, to whom my sorweful hert obeyde.
So ferforthely that fro that blysful houre
That I yow swor to ben al frely youre, —
I mene yow, Antonius, my knyght, —
That never wakyng in the day or nyght
Ye nere ³ out of myn hertes remembraunce,
For wele or woo, for carole, or for daunce ;
And in my self this covaunt made I thoo,

¹ Body (Lat. *corpus*). ² Fetched. ³ Were not.

That ryght swich as ye felten wele or woo,
 As ferforth as yt in my powere lay, 690
 Unreprovable unto my wifhood ay,
 The same wolde I felen, life or deethe ;
 And thilke covenaut while me lasteth breethe
 I wol fulfille ; and that shal wel be seene,
 Was never unto hir love a trewer queene."

And wyth that worde, naked, with ful good
 herte,

Amonge the serpents in the pit she sterte.
 And ther she chees to han hir buryinge.
 Anoon the neddres¹ gonne hir for to styng,
 And she hir deeth receveth with good chere,
 For love of Antony that was hir so dere. 701
 And this is storial, sooth it ys no fable.

Now er I fynde a man thus trewe and stable,
 And wolde for love his deeth so frely take,
 I prey God lat oure hedes nevere ake !

Explicit Legenda Cleopatre, Martyris.

Incipit Legenda Tesbe Babilon, Martiris.

At Babiloyne² whylom fil it thus, —
 The whiche toune the queene Simyramus
 Leet dichen al about, and walles make
 Ful hye, of harde tiles wel ybake :
 There were dwellynge in this noble toune 710

¹ Adders. ² The story of Pyramus and Thisbe is told by Ovid and
 one other author, both laying the scene in Babylon. See *Metamor-
 phoses*, iv. 55.

Two lordes, which that were of grete renoune,
 And woneden ¹ so neigh upon a grene,
 That ther nas but a stoon wal hem betwene,
 As ofte in grette tounes ys the wone.²
 And sooth to seyn, that o man had a sone,
 Of al that londe oon the lustieste ;
 That other had a doghtre, the faireste
 That esteward in the worlde was tho dwellynge
 The name of everyche gan to other sprynge,
 By wommen that were neyghebores aboute ; 720
 For in that contre yit, wythouten doute,
 Maydenes ben ykept for jelousye
 Ful streyte, leste they diden somme folye.

This yonge man was cleped Piramus,
 Tesbe highte the maide, — Naso ³ seith thus.
 And thus by reporte was hir name yshove,⁴
 That as they wox in age, wax hir love.
 And certeyne, as by reson of hir age,
 Ther myghte have ben betwex hem mariage,
 But that hir fadres nold yt not assente, 730
 And booth in love ylike soore they brente,
 That noon of al hir frendes myghte yt lette.
 But prevely sommtyme yit they mette
 Be sleight, and spoken somme of hire desire,
 As “wre the glede ⁵ and hotter is the fire ;”
 Forbeede a love, and it is ten times so woode.

This wal, which that bitwixe hem bothe
 stoode,

¹ Dwelt. ² Wont. ³ Publius Ovidius Naso. ⁴ Her fame published. ⁵ Cover the coals. ⁶ Mad.

Was cloven atwoo, right fro the toppe adoune.
Of olde tyme, of his foundacioun.
But yit this clyft was so narwe and lite ¹ 740
Yt was nat seene, deere ynogh a myte ; ²
But what is that that love kannat espye ?
Ye lovers twoo, yf that I shal nat lye,
Ye founden first this litel narwe clifte,
And with a soun as softe as any shryfte,
They leete hir wordes thurgh the clifte pace,
And tolden, while that they stoden in the place,
Al hire compleynt of love, and al hire woo.
At every tyme whan they dorste soo,
Upoñ the o syde of the walle stood he, 750
And on that other syde stood Tesbe,
The swoote soun of other to receyve.

And thus hire wardeyns wolde they disceyve,
And every day this walle they wolde threete,
And wisshe to God that it were doune ybete.
Thus wolde they seyn : “ Allas, thou wikked
walle !

Thurgh thyn envye thow us lettest alle !
Why nyltow cleve, or fallen al atwo ?
Or at the leeste, that thow wouldest so,
Yit woldestow but ones let us meete, 760
Or oones that we myghte kyssen sweete,
Than were we covered ³ of oure cares colde.
But natheles, yit be we to the holde. ⁴
In as muche as thou suffrest for to goon
Our wordes thurgh thy lyme and eke thy stoon,
Yet oghte we with the ben wel apayed.” ⁵

Little. ² That is, scarcely. ³ Recovered. ⁴ Holden ⁵ Satisfied

And whan these idel wordes weren sayde,
 The colde walle they wolden kyssen of stoon,
 And take hir leve, and foorth they wolden goon.
 Alle this was gladly in the evetyde, 770
 Or wonder erly, lest men it espyede.

And longe tyme they wroght in this manere,
 Til on a day, whan Phebus gan to clere,
 Aurora with the stremes of hire hete
 Had dried uppe the dewe of herbes wete,
 Unto this clyfte, as it was wont to be,
 Come Piramus, and after come Tesbe.
 And plighen trouthe fully in here faye,¹
 That ilke same nyght to steele awaye,
 And to begile hire wardeyns everychone, 780
 And forth out of the citee for to gone.

And, for the feeldes ben so broode and wide,
 For to meete in o place at o tyde,
 They sette markes ; hire metyng sholde bee
 'Ther kyng Nynus was graven,² under a tree, —
 For olde payens,³ that ydoles heriede,⁴
 Useden thoo in feeldes to ben beriede, —
 And faste by his grave was a welle.
 And, shortly of this tale for to telle,
 This covenant was affermed wonder faste, 790
 And longe hem thoghte that the sonne laste,
 That it nere⁵ goon under the see adoune.

This Tesbe hath so greete affeccioun,
 And so grete lykyng Piramus to see,

¹ Faith. ² Where Ninus (the founder of Babylon) was buried
 Pagans. ⁴ Praised. ⁵ Were not.

That whan she seigh hire tyme myghte bee,
At nyght she stale away ful prevely,
With hire face ywympled¹ subtilly.
For al hire frendes, for to save hire trouthe,
She hath forsake ; alas, and that is routhe,²
That ever woman wolde be so trewe 800
To trusten man, but she the bet hym knewe !

And to the tree she gooth a ful goode paas,
For love made hir so hardy in this caas ;
And by the welle adoune she gan hir dresse.
Allas ! than comith a wilde leonesse
Out of the woode, withouten more arreste,
With bloody mouth, of strangelynge of a beste,
To drynken of the welle ther as she sat.
And whan that Tesbe had espyed that,
She ryst hire up, with a ful drery herte, 810
And in a cave with dredful foot she sterte,
For by the moone she saugh yt wel withalle.
And as she ranne, hir wympel leet she falle,
And tooke noon hede, so soore she was
awhaped,³

And eke so glade that she was escaped ;
And ther she sytte, and darketh⁴ wonder stille
Whan that this lyonesse hath dronke hire fille.
Aboute the welle gan she for to wynde,⁵
And ryght anoon the wympil gan she fynde,
And with hir bloody mouth it al to-rente. 820
Whan this was don, no lenger she ne stente,
But to the woode hir wey than hath she nome.⁶

Veiled. ² Pity. ³ Confounded. ⁴ Hideth. ⁵ Turn. ⁶ Taken

And at the laste this Piramus ys come,
But al to longe, allas, at home was hee !
The moone shoone, men myghte wel ysee,
And in hys wey, as that he come ful faste,
Hise eighen to the grounde adoune he caste ;
And in the sonde as he behelde adoune,
He seigh¹ the steppes broode of a lyoun ;
And in his herte he sodeynly agroos,² 83c
And pale he wex, therwith his heer aroos,
And nere he come, and founde the wimpe-
torne.

“Allas,” quod he, “the day that I was borne !
This oo nyght wol us lovers boothe slee !
How shulde I axen mercy of Tesbee,
Whan I am he that have yow slayne, allas ?
My byddyng hath i-slayn yow in this caas !
Allas, to bidde a woman goon by nyghte
In place thereas a peril fallen myghte !
And I so slowe ! allas, I ne hadde bee 840
Here in this place, a furlong wey or ³ yee !
Now what lyon that be in this foreste,
My body mote rente, or what beste
That wilde is, gnawen mote he now my herte ! ”
And with that worde he to the wympel sterte,
And kiste it ofte, and wepte on it ful sore ;
And seyde, “ Wympel, allas ! ther nys no more,
But thou shalt feele as wel the blode of me,
As thou hast felt the bledynge of Tesbe.” 849
And with that worde he smot hym to the herte

The blood out of the wounde as brode sterte
As water, whan the conduyte broken ys.¹

Now Tesbe, which that wyste [nevere] this,
But syttyng in hire drede, she thoghte thus :
“ Yf it so falle that my Piramus
Be comen hider, and may me nat fynde,
He may me holden fals, and ek unkynde.”
And oute she comith, and after hym gan espie
Booth with hire herte and with hire eighen ;
And thoghte, “ I wol him tellen of my drede,
Booth of the lyonesse and al my dede.” 861
And at the laste hire love than hath she founde,
Betynge with his helis on the grounde,
Al bloody ; and therwithal abak she sterte,
And lyke the waves quappe² gan hir herte,
And pale as boxe³ she wax, and in a throwe⁴
Avised hir, and gan him wel to knowe,
That it was Piramus, hire herte dere.

Who koude write which a dedely chere
Hath Tesbe now ? and how hire heere she
rente ? 870
And how she gan hir selve to turmente ?
And how she lyth and swowneth on the
grounde ?
And how she wepe of teres ful his wounde ?
How medeleth⁵ she his blood with hir com-
pleynte ?
How with his blood hir selven gan she peynte ?

¹ This is taken literally from Ovid. ² Like the waves, palpitate
This is Ovid's expression. ⁴ Moment. ⁵ Mingleth.

How clippeth ¹ she the dede corps? alas!
 How dooth this woful Tesbe in this cas?
 How kysseth she his frosty mouthe so colde?
 "Who hath doon this? and who hath ben so
 bolde

To sleen my leefe? O speke, Piramus! 88a
 I am thy Tesbe, that thee calleth thus!"
 And therwithal she lyfteth up his heed.

This woful man, that was nat fully deed,
 Whan that he herde the name of Tesbe crien,
 On hire he caste his hevvy dedely eyen,
 And doune agayn, and yeldeth up the gooste.

Tesbe rist uppe, withouten noyse or booste,²
 And saugh hir wympel and his empty shethe,
 And eke his swerde, that him hath doon to
 dethe,

Than spake she thus: "Thys woful hande,"
 quod she, 89a

"Ys strong ynogh in swiche a werke to me;
 For love shal me give strengthe and hardy-
 nesse,

To make my wounde large ynogh, I gesse.
 I wole the folowen deede, and I wol be
 Felawe and cause eke of thy deeth," quod she.
 "And thogh that nothing save the deth oonly
 Myghte the fro me departe³ trewely,
 Thou shal noo more now departe fro me
 Than fro the deth, for I wol goo with the.

¹ Embraceth. ² Sound. The word is found in *Piers Plowman*
 Separate.

"And now, ye wrecched jelouse fadres oure,
 We that weren whilome children youre, 901
 We prayen yow, withouten more envye
 That in oo grave [now] we moten lye,
 Syn love hath us broght this pitouse ende.
 And ryghtwis God to every lover sende,
 That loveth trewely, moore prosperite
 Than ever hadde Piramus and Tesbe.
 And let noo gentile woman hire assure,¹
 To putten hire in swiche an aventure.
 But God forbede but a woman kan 910
 Ben as trewe and lovyng as a man,
 And for my parte I shal anoon it kythe."²
 And with that worde his swerde she took as-
 swithe,³

That warme was of hire loves blood, and hoote,
 And to the herte she hire selven smoot.

And thus are Tesbe and Piramus agoo.
 Of trewe men I fynde but fewe moo
 In al my bookes, save this Piramus,
 And therfore have I spoken of hym thus.
 For yt is deyntee to us men to fynde 920
 A man that kan in love be trewe and kynde.

Here may ye seen, what lover so he be,
 A woman dar and kan as wel as he.

Explicit Legenda Tesbe.

¹ Have assurance. Show. ³ Quickly.

*Incipit Legenda Didonis, Martiris, Carthaginis
Regine.*

Glorie and honour, Virgile Mantuan,
 Be to thy name ! and I shal as I kan
 Folowe thy lanterne as thou goste byforn,
 How Eneas to Dido was forsworne,
 In thyne Eneyde.¹ And of Naso ² wol I take
 The tenour and the grete effectes make.

Whan Troy i-broght was to destruccion 930
 By Grekes sleight, and namely by Synon,³
 Feynyng the hors offred unto Minerve,
 Thurgh which that many a Trojan moste sterve,
 And Ector had after his deeth appered ;
 And fire so woode, it myghte nat ben stered,⁴
 In al the noble tour of Ylion,
 That of the citee was the cheef dungeon ;
 And al the contree was so lowe ybroght,
 And Priamus the kyng fordoon and noght ;
 And Eneas was charged by Venus 940
 To fleen away ; he tooke Ascanius,
 That was his sone, in his ryght hande and
 fledde,
 And on his bakke he baar, and with him ledde,
 His olde fader, cleped Anchises ;
 And by the wey his wyf Creusa he lees,⁵
 And mochel sorowe hadde he in his mynde,

¹ *Æneid*, books i.-iv. ² *Heroides*, epistle vii. Historically
 Eneas must have lived long before the time of Dido. ³ Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 8840. ⁴ Directed ⁵ Lost

Er that he koude his felawshippe fynde.
 But at the laste, whan he hadde hem founde,
 He made him redy in a certeyn stounde,¹
 And to the see ful faste he gan him hye, 950
 And sayleth forth with al his companye
 Towarde Ytayle, as wolde destanee.
 But of his adventures in the see
 Nys nat to purpos for to speke of here,
 For it acordeth nat to my matere.
 But as I seyde, of hym and of Dydo
 Shal be my tale, til that I have do.

So longe he saylled in the salte see,
 Til in Lybye unneth² arrayved he,
 So was he with the tempest al to-shake. 960
 And whan that he the havene had ytake,
 He had a knyghte was called Achates,
 And him of al his felawshippe he ches³
 To goon with him, the contree for tespye.
 He toke with him na more companye,
 But forth they goon, and lafte hise shippes ride,
 His fere⁴ and he, withouten any guyde.

So longe he walketh in this wilderness,
 Til at the last he mette an hunteresse ;
 A bowe in hande, and arwes hadde shee ; 970
 Hire clothes were knytte unto the knee.
 But she was yit the fairest creature
 That ever was yformed by nature ;
 And Eneas and Achates she grette,
 And thus she to hem spak whan she hem mette.

¹ Time ² Libya scarcely. ³ Chose. ⁴ Companion.

“Sawe ye,” quod she, “as ye han walked
wide,

Any of my sustren walke yow besyde,
With any wilde boor or other beste,
That they han hunted to in this foreste,
Ytukked up, with arwes in hire cas?” 980

“Nay soothly, lady!” quod this Eneas;
“But by thy beaute, as yt thynketh me,
Thou myghtest never erthely woman be,
But Phebus suster artow, as I gesse.
And yf so be that thou be a goddesse,
Have mercy on oure labour and oure woo.”

“I nam no goddesse soothely,” quod she
thoo;

“For maydens walken in this contree here,
With arwes and with bowe, in this manere.
This is the regne of Libie ther ye been, 990
Of which that Dido lady is and queene.”
And shortly tolde al the occasioun
Why Dido come into that regioun,
Of which as now me lusteth nat to ryme;
It nedeth nat, it nere but los of tyme.
For this is al and somme; it was Venus
His owene moder, that spake with him thus;
And to Cartage she bad he sholde him dighte,¹
And vanysshed anoon out of his sighte.
I koude folwe worde for worde Virgile, 1000
But it wolde lasten al to longe while.

Th’s noble queene, that cleped was Dido,

¹ Betake himself.

That whilom was the wife of Sicheo,¹
 That fairer was than the bryghte sonne,
 This noble toun of Cartage hath begonne ;
 In which she regneth with so grete honoure,
 That she was holde of alle quenes floure,
 Of gentillesse, of fredome, of beautee,
 That wel was him that myght hir oones see.
 Of kynges and of lordes so desired, 1010
 That al the worlde hire beaute hadde yfired,
 She stode so wel in every wyghtes grace.

Whan Eneas was come unto that place,
 Unto the maistre² temple of al the toun,
 Ther Dido was in hir devocioun,
 Ful prively his wey than hath he nome.³
 Whan he was in the large temple come, —
 I kannat seye yf that hit be possible, —
 But Venus hadde him maked invisible ;
 Thus seith the booke, withouten any les.⁴ 1020

And whan this Eneas and Achates
 Hadden in the temple ben over-alle,
 Than founde they depeynted on a walle
 How Troy and al the londe destrued was.
 “Allas, that I was born !” quod Eneas.
 “Thurghout the worlde oure shame is kid⁵ so
 wide,

Now it is peynted upon every side.
 We, that weren in prosperitee,
 Be now disclaundred, and in swiche degre,

¹ Acerbas, called by Virgil Sichæus. *Æneid*, i. 343. ² Chief.
 Taken. ⁴ Lie. ⁵ Made known.

No lenger for to lyven I ne kepe."¹ 1030
 And with that worde he braste out for to wepe
 So tendirly that routhe it was to seene.

This fresshe lady, of the citee queene,
 Stoodde in the temple, in hire estat royalle,
 So richely, and eke so faire withalle,
 So yonge, so lusty, with hire eighen glade,
 That yf that God, that hevene and erthe made,
 Wolde han a love, for beaute and goodenesse,
 And womanhode, and trouthe, and semlynesse,
 Whom sholde he loven but this lady swete?
 Ther nys no woman to him halfe so mete. 1041
 Fortune, that hath the worlde in governaunce,
 Hath sodeynly broght in so newe a chaunce,
 That never yit was in so fremde² a cas.
 For al the companye of Eneas,
 Which that he wende han loren in the see,
 Aryved ys, noght fer fro the citee.
 For which the grettest of his lordes, some
 By aventure ben to the citee come
 Unto that same temple for to seke 1050
 The queene, and of hire socour hir beseke ;
 Swich renowne was ther spronge of hir good
 nesse.

And whan they hadde tolde al hire distresse.
 And al hir tempest and hire harde cas,
 Unto the queene appered Eneas,
 And openly beknew that it was he.
 Who hadde joy thanne, but his meynee,³
 That hadden founde hire lord, hire governour

¹ Care. ² Strange. ³ Followers.

The queene sawgh they dide him swich
honour,
And had herde ofte of Eneas er thoo, 1060
And in hir herte hadde routhe and woo,
That ever swiche a noble man as hee
Shal ben dishereted in swiche degree.
And sawgh the man, that he was lyke a knyghte,
And suffisaunt of persone and of myghte,
And lyke to ben a verray gentilman.
And wel hys wordes he besette¹ kan,
And hadde a noble visage for the noones,
And formed wel of brawnes and of boones ;
And after Venus hadde swich fairenesse, 1070
That no man myghte be half so faire, I gesse,
And wel a lorde him semede for to bee.
And for he was a straunger, somewhat shee
Lyked him the bette, as God do boote,²
To somme folke often newe thinge is swoote.
Anoon hire herte hath pitee of his woo,
And with pitee, love come alsoo ;
And thus for pitee and for gentillesse,
Refresshed mote he ben of his distresse.

She seyde, certes, that she sory was, 1080
That he hath had swich peril and swiche cas ;⁴
And in hire frendely speche, in this manere
She to him spake, and seyde as ye may here.

“Be ye nat Venus sone and Anchises ?
In good faythe, at the worshippe and encres
That I may goodly doon yow, ye shal háve :

¹ Order. ² Help. ³ Fortune.

Youre shippes and youre meynee shal I save."
 And many a gentil worde she spake him too,
 And comaunded hire messageres goo
 The same day, withouten any faylle, 1098
 Hys shippes for to seke and hem vitaylle.
 Ful many a beeste she to the shippes sente,
 And with the wyne she gan hem to presente,
 And to hire royalle paleys she hire spedde,
 And Eneas alwey with hire she ledde.
 What nedeth yow the feste to discryve?
 He never better at ese was in his lyve.
 Ful was the feste of deyntees and richesse,
 Of instruments, of songe, and of gladnesse,
 And many an amoureuse lokyng and devys. 1100

This Eneas is comen to Paradys
 Out of the swolowe¹ of helle; and thus in joye
 Remembreth² him of his estaat in Troye.
 To daunsyng chambres ful of parements,³
 Of riche beddes, and of pavements,
 This Eneas is ladde after the meete.
 And with the queene whan that she hadde seete
 And spices parted, and the wyne agoon,⁴
 Unto hyse chambres was he lad anoon
 To take his ease, and for to have his reste 1110
 With al his folke, to doon what so hem leste.

Ther nas coursere wel ybridled noon,
 Ne stede for the justyng wel to goon,
 Ne large palfrey, esy for the noones,

¹ Gulf, abyss. ² Remindeth. ³ Adornments. Cf *Canterbury Tales*, l. 15,045. ⁴ Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 819.

Ne juwel frette ful of riche stoonen,
 Ne sakkes ful of gold, of large wyghte,
 Ne rubee noon that shyneth by nyghte,
 Ne gentil hawteyn faukone heroneer,¹
 Ne hound for hert, or wilde boor or deer, 1119
 Ne coupe of golde, with floryns newe ybette,²
 That in the londe of Lybye may ben gette,
 That Dido ne hath hit Eneas isente ;
 And al is payed, what that he hath spente.
 Thus kan this honourable queene hir gester
 calle,

As she that kan in fredome passen alle.

Eneas soothly eke, withouten les,
 Hath sent to his shippe by Achates
 After his sone, and after ryche thynges, 1128
 Booth ceptre, clothes, broches, and eke rynges ;
 Somme for to were, and somme for to presente
 To hire, that alle thise noble thinges him sente ;
 And bad hys sone how that he sholde make
 The presentynge, and to the queene it take.

Repeyred is this Achates agayne,
 And Eneas ful blysful is and fayne,
 To seen his yonge sone Ascanius.
 For unto him yt was reported thus,
 That Cupido, that is the god of love,
 At prayere of hys moder hye above,
 Hadde the liknesse of the childe ytake, 1140
 This noble queen enamoured to make
 On Eneas. But of that scripture³

¹ Haughty heron-attacking falcon. ² Ornamented. ³ Writing.

Be as be may, I make of yt no cure.
But sooth is this, the queene hath made swich
chere

Unto this childe that wonder is to here ;
And of the present that his fader sente,
She thanked him ful ofte in goode intente.

Thus is this queene in pleasaunce and in joye,
With al thise newe lusty folke of Troye.
And of the dedes hath she moore enquired
Of Eneas, and al the storie lered ¹ 1151
Of Troye ; and al the longe day they tweye
Entendeden ² for to speke and for to pleye.
Of which ther gan to bredden swich a fire,
That sely ³ Dido hath now swich desire
With Eneas hir newe geste to deele,
That she loste hire hewe and eke hire heele.⁴

Now to theeffecte, now to the fruyt of al,
Why I have tolde this storye, and tellen shal.

Thus I bygynne : It fil upon a nyght, 1160
Whan that the moone upreysed had hire lyght,
This noble queene unto hire reste wente.
She siketh soore, and gan hire selfe turmente ;
She waketh, walwithe, ⁵ maketh many a brayde,⁶
As doone thise lovers, as I have herde sayde ;
And at the laste, unto hire suster Anne
She made hir mone, and ryght thus spake she
thanne.

“ Now, dere suster myn, what may it be

¹ I earned. ² Attend. ³ Harmless. (The word also means **innocent**, happy.) ⁴ Health. ⁵ Tosseth. ⁶ Start.

That me agasteth in my dreame?" quod she.
 "This ilke Trojane is so in my thoghte, 1170
 For that me thinketh he is so wel ywroghte,
 And eke so likely to ben a man,
 And therwithal soo mykel good he kan,
 That al my love and lyf lyth in his cure.
 Have ye nat herde hym telle hys aventure?
 Now certes, Anne, gif that ye rede¹ me,
 I wil fayne to him ywedded be;
 This is theffect; what sholde I more seyn?
 In him lith alle, to doo me lyve or deyn."

Hir suster Anne, as she that kouth² hire
 goode, 1180
 Seyde as hire thoght, and somedel yt with-
 stoode.

But herof was so longe a sermonyng,
 Yt were to longe to make rehersyng.
 But, finally, yt may nat be withstonde:
 Love woll love, for no wyght wol yt wonde.³

The dawenyng upryst oute of the see,⁴
 This amoureuse queene chargeth hire meyn
 The nettes dresse,⁵ and speres brood and kene;
 An huntynge wol this lusty fresshe queene,
 So priketh hire this newe joly woo. 1190
 To hors is al hire lusty folke ygoo;
 Unto the courte the houndes ben ybroughte,
 And up on coursere, swyfte as any thoughte,
 Hir yonge knyghtes heven⁶ al aboute,

¹ Counsel. ² Knew. ³ Desist. ⁴ Here the poet follows Virgil
 very closely. Cf. *Æneid*, iv. 29, etc. ⁵ Prepare. ⁶ Mount.

And of hir women eke an houe route.
 Upon a thikke palfrey, paper white,
 With sadel rede, enbroudet with delyte,
 Of golde the barres up enbosed heighe,
 Sitte Dido, al in golde and perrey wreighe.¹
 And she is faire as is the bryghte morwe,² 1200
 That heeleth seke folkes of nyghtes sorwe.

Upon a coursere, startlyng as the fire,
 Men myghte turne him with a lytel wire,
 Sitte Eneas, like Phebus to devyse,
 So was he fressh arrayed in hys wyse.
 The fomy bridel, with the bitte of golde,
 Governeth he ryght as himselfe hathe wolde.³
 And forth this noble queene, this lady, ride
 On huntyng, with this Trojan by hire syde.

The heerde of hertes founden ys anoon, 1210
 With "Hay!" "Goo bet!" "Prike thou!"

"Lat goon, lat goon!"

"Why nyl the lyoun comen, or the bere,
 That I myght hym ones meten with this spere?"
 Thus seyn thise yonge folke, and up they kylle
 The wilde hertes, and han hem at here wille.

Amonges al this, to romblen gan the hevene;
 The thonder rorede with a grisly stevene;⁴
 Doune come the rayne, with haile and sleex so
 faste,

With hevenes fire, that ys so sore agaste
 This noble quene, and also hire meynee, 1220
 That yche of hem was glad away to flee;

ewels wrought. ² Morning. ³ Willd. ⁴ Frightful sound

And shortly, fro the tempest hire to save,
 She fled hire selfe into a lytel cave,
 And with hire wente this Eneas alsoo.
 I not with hem yf ther went any moo ;
 The auctour maketh of hit no mencion.
 And here beganne the depe affeccion
 Betwix hem two ; this was the firste morwe
 Of hire gladnesse, and gynnynge of hir sorwe.
 For there hath Eneas yknyled ¹ soo, 1230
 And tolde hir al his herte and al his woo,
 And sworne so depe to hire to be trewe
 For wele or woo, and chaunge for noo newe,
 And as a fals lover so wel kan pleyne,²
 That sely Dido rewed on his peyne,
 And toke hym for housbonde, and became his
 wife

For evermor, while that hem laste lyfe.
 And after this, whan that the tempest stente,
 With myrth, out as they come, home they wente.

The wikked fame up roos, and that anoon,
 How Eneas hath with the queene ygoon 1241
 Into the cave, and demed ³ as hem liste.
 And whan the kynge that Yarbas hight ⁴ hit
 wiste,

As he that had hire loved ever his lyfe,
 And wowed ⁵ hire to have to hys wife,
 Swiche sorowe as he hath maked, and suche
 chere,

Kneled Complain. Judged. ⁴ Named Iarbus. He was
 an unsuccessful suitor of Dido ⁵ Wooed.

Yt is a rewthe and pitee for to here.
But as in love alday it happeth soo,
That oon shal lawghen at anothers woo ;
Now lawghed Eneas, and is in joye, 1250
And more riches than ever was in Troye.

O sely¹ woman, ful of innocence,
Ful of pitee, of trouthe, and conscience,
What maked yow to men to trusten soo?
Have ye suche rewthe upon hir feyned woo,
And han suche olde ensaumples yow beforne?
Se ye nat alle how they ben forsworne?
Where se ye oon that he ne hath lafte his
leefe?²

Or ben unkynde, or don hir some myscheefe?
Or pilled⁸ hir, or bosted of hys dede? 1260

Ye may as wel hit seen as ye may rede.
Take hede now of this grete gentilman,
This Trojan, that so wel hire plese kan,
That feyneth him so trewe and obeysinge,
So gentil, and so privy of his doynge ;
And kan so wel doon al his obeysaunce
To hir, at festes and at daunce,
And whan she gooth to temple, and home
ageyne,

And fasten til he hath his lady seyne ;
And beren in his devyses for hire sake 1270
Wot I not what ; and songes wolde he make,
Justen, and doon of armes many thynges,
Send hire letres, tokens, broches, rynges.
Now herkneth how he shal his lady serve.

¹ Weak ² Love. ³ Robbed

Ther as he was in peril for to sterve
 For hunger and for myscheef in the see,
 And desolate, and fledde fro his contree,
 And al his folke with tempeste al to-driven,
 She hath hir body and eke hir reame¹ given
 Into his hande, theras she myghte have beene
 Of other lande than of Cartage a queene, 1281
 And lyved in joy ynogh ; what wolde ye more ?

This Eneas, that hath thus depe yswore,
 Ys wery of his crafte within a throwe ;²
 The hoothe erneste is al overblowe.
 And prively he dooth his shippes dyghte,³
 And shapeth him to steele away by nyghte.

This Dido hath suspesion of this,
 And thoughte wel that hit was al amys ; 1289
 For in his bedde he lythe a nyght and siketh,
 She asketh him anoon what him mysliketh.

“My dere herte, which that I love mooste,
 Certes,” quod he, “thys nyght my fadres gooste
 Hath in my slepe me so sore turmentede,
 And eke Mercure his message hath present-

ede,
 That nedes to the conqueste of Ytayle
 My destany is soone for to sayle,
 For whiche me thynketh brosten ys myn herte.”
 Therwith his false teeres oute they sterte,
 And taketh hir within his armes twoo. 1300

“Ys that in ernest ?” quod she ; “wol ye
 soo ?

¹ Realm. ² Short time. ³ Causeth his ships to be prepared.

Have ye nat sworne to wife me to take?
 Allas, what woman wol ye of me make?
 I am a gentil woman, and a queene;
 Ye wol nat fro your wyfe thus foule fleene!
 That I was borne, allas! What shal I doo?"

To telle in short, this noble queene Dido
 She seketh halwes,¹ and doothe sacrificise;
 She kneleth, crieth, that routhe is to devyse;
 Conjureth him, and profereth him to bee 1310
 Hys thral, hys servant, in the lest degre.
 She falleth him to foote, and swowneth there,
 Disshevely with hire bryghte gelte² here,
 And seith, "Have mercy! let me with yow
 ryde;

These lordes, which that wonnen³ me besyde,
 Wol me destroien oonly for youre sake.
 And⁴ ye wole now me to wife take,
 As ye han sworn, than wol I give yow leve
 To sleen me with your swerd now soone at eve
 For than shal I yet dien as youre wife. 1320
 I am with childe, and give my childe his lyfe!
 Mercy, lorde, have pitee in youre thought!"

But al this thing awayleth hire ryght nought,
 For on a nyght sleping he let hir lye,
 And staal⁵ away upon his companye,
 And as a traytour forthe he gan to sayle
 Towarde the large countree of Ytayle.
 And thus hath he lefte Dido in woo and pyne,

¹ Saints, *i. e.*, goes to the temples. Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 14 Golden. ² Dwell. ³ Unless. ⁴ Stole.

And weddid there a lady highte Lavyne.
A clooth he lefte, and eke his swerde stond-
ynge — · 1330

Whan he fro Dido staale in hire slepynge —
 Righte at hir beddes hed : so gan he hye,
 Whanne that he staale away to his navye.

Which clooth, whan sely Dido gan awake,
She hath i-kyste ful ofte for hys sake ;
And seyde, “ O swete clooth, while Jupiter hit
 leste,

Take my soule, unbynde me of this unreste,
I have fulfilled of fortune al the course."

And thus, alas, withouten hys socourse,¹
Twenty tyme yswowned hath she thanne. 1340

And whan that she unto hir suster Anne
Compleyned had, of which I may not write,
So grete routhe I have hit for to endite,
And bad hir noryce ² and hir sustren goon
To feche fire, and other thinges anoon,
And seyde that she wolde sacrifice ;
And whan she myght hir tyme wel espye,
Upon the fire of sacrifice she sterte,
And with his swerde she roof ³ hire to the
herte.

But, as myn auctour⁴ seythe, yit thus she
seyde, 1350

Or she was hurte, beforne or she deide,
She wroot a letter anoon, that thus biganne.

¹ Succor. ² Nurse. ³ Rived Ovid. Lines 1354-1364 are a free version of the *Heroides*, vii. 1-8.

“Ryght so,” quod she, “as the white swanne
 Agenst his deeth begynneth for to synge,
 Ryght so to yow I make my compleynynge,
 Nat that I trowe to geten yow agayne,
 For wel I woot that hit is al in vayne,
 Syn that the goddys ben contrariouse to me.
 But syn my name ys loste thurgh yow,” quod
 she,

“I may wel leese a worde on yow, or letter,
 Albeit I shal be never the better. 1361
 For thilke wynde that blew your shippe away,
 The same wynde hath blowe away your fay.”
 But who-so wool al this letter have in mynde,
 Rede Ovyde, and in him he shal hit fynde.

*Explicit Legenda Didonis, Martiris, Cartagenis
 Regine.*

*Incipit Legenda Ypsiphile et Medee, Martiris.*¹

Thou roote of false lovers, duke Jason !
 Thou slye devourer, and confusyon
 Of gentil women, gentil creatures !
 Thou madest thy reclaymynge² and thy lures
 To ladies of thy staately aparaunce, 1370
 And of thy wordes farsed³ with plesaunce,
 And of thy feyned trouthe, and thy manere,
 With thyne obeysaunce and humble chere,

¹ The Legends of the “Martyrs” Hypsiphile and Medea are found in Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, vii., and *Heroides*, vi., xii. ² To reclaim
 jawk is to tame and train it. ³ Stuffed (Fr. *farcir*).

And with thy countrefeted peyn and woo!
 Ther other falsen oon, thou falseste twoo!
 O, ofte swore thou that thou woldest deye
 For love, whan thou ne felteste maladeye,
 Save foule delyte, which that thou callest love!
 If that I lyve, thy name shal be shove 1379
 In Englyssh, that thy sleighte shal be knowe;
 Have at the, Jason! now thyn horn is blowe!

But certes, it is bothe routhe and woo,
 That love with false lovers werketh soo;
 For they shalle have wel better and gretter
 chere

Than he that hath i-boughte love ful dere,
 Or had in armes many a bloody box.¹
 For ever as tender a capon eteth the fox,
 Though he be fals, and hath the foule betrayed,
 As shal the goode man that therfor payed;
 Alle thof² he have to the capon skille³ and
 ryghte, 1390

The false fox wil have his part at nyghte.
 On Jason this ensample is wel yseene,
 By Isiphile and Medea the queene.

In Tessalye, as Ovyde telleth us,
 Ther was a knyght that highte Pelleus,⁴
 That had a brother whiche that hight Eson.⁵
 And whan for age he myghte unnethes gon,
 He gaf to Pelleus the governynge
 Of al his regne, and made him lorde and kynge.
 Of whiche Eson this Jason geten was, 1400

¹ Blow. ² Though. ³ Reasor. ⁴ Peleas. ⁵ Æson.

That in his tyme in al that lande ther nas
 Nat suche a famouse knyghte of gentillesse,
 Of fredome,¹ of strengthe, and of lustynesse.
 After his fader deeth he bar him soo,
 That there nas noon that lyste ben his foo,
 But dide him al honour and companye.
 Of which this Pelleus hath grete envye,
 Imagynyng that Jason myghte bee
 Enhaunced so, and put in suche degree,
 With love of lordes of his regioun, 1410
 That from hys regne he may be put adoun.

And in his witte a nyghte compassed he
 How Jason myghte beste destroyed be,
 Withoute sclaunder of his compassemente.
 And at the laste he tooke avysemente,
 To senden him into some fer contre,
 There as this Jason may distroyed be.
 This was his witte, al² made he to Jasoun,
 Grete chere of love and of affeccioun,
 For drede lest his lordes hyt espyede. 1420

So felle hyt so as fame renneth wide,
 Ther was suche tidynge overalle, and suche los,³
 That in an ile that called was Colcos,⁴
 Beyond Troye estewarde in the see,
 That ther a ram was that men myghte see,
 That had a flees of gold, that shoon so bryghte,
 That no wher was ther suche another syghte,
 But hit was kept alway with⁵ a dragoun, —
 And many other mervels up and down ;

¹ Generosity. ² Although. ³ Fame (Lat. *laus*) ⁴ Colchis. ⁵ By.

And with twoo booles maked al of bras, 1430
That spitten fire ; and muche thinge ther was.

But this was eke the tale nathelees,
That who-so wolde wynne thilke flees,
He moste booth — or he hyt wynne myghte —
With the booles and the dragoun fyghte ;
And kyng Aetes lorde was of that ile.
This Pelleus bethoughte upon this wile,
That he his nevywe Jason wolde enhorte
To saylen to that londe, him to disporte,
And seyde, “ Neviwe, yf hyt myghte be, 1440
That suche worshippe ¹ myghte falle the,
That thou this famouse tresor myghte wynne,
And brynge hit my regyoun wythinne,
It were to me grette plesaunce and honoure ;
Thanne were I holde to quyte ² thy labour,
And al the costes I wol my-selfe make ;
And chese what folke thou wilt wyth the take
Let see now, darstow taken this viage ? ”

Jason was yonge, and lustie of corage,
And undertooke to doon this ilke emprise. 1450
Anoon Argus ³ his shippes gan devyse.

With Jason wente the stronge Hercules,
And many another that he with him ches. ⁴
But who-so axeth who is with him goon,
Let him rede “ Argonauticon,” ⁵
For he wol telle a tale longe ynoughe.
Philoctetes ⁶ anoon the sayle up droughe,

¹ Honor. ² Requite ³ The builder of the Argo. ⁴ Chose. ⁵ An unfinished heroic poem by Valerius Flaccus. ⁶ A skillful pilot mentioned by Guido.

Whan the wynde was good, and gan him hye
 Out of his contree called Tessalye.
 So longe he sayled in the salte see, 146c
 Til in the ile of Lemnos arryved he.
 Al be this not rehersed of Guydo,¹
 Yet seyth Ovyde in hys Epistoles so ;
 And of this ile lady was, and queene,
 The faire yonge Ypsiphile the shene,
 That whilom Thoas doughter was, the kyng.

Ypsiphyle was goon in hire pleyng,
 And romynge on the clyves² by the see.
 Under a brake anoon espiede shee 1469
 Where lay the shippe that Jason gan arryve.
 Of hire goodnesse adoun she sendeth blyve,
 To weten,³ yf that any straunge wyghte
 With tempest thider were yblow a-nyghte,
 To doon hem socour, as was hir usaunce
 To forthren every wyghte, and don plesaunce
 Of very bountee,⁴ and of curteysie.

This messagere adoun him gan to hye,
 And founde Jason and Ercules also,
 That in a cogge⁵ to londe were ygo,
 Hem to refresshen, and to take the eyre. 1480
 The morwenyng atempree was and faire,
 And in hys wey this messenger hem mette ;
 Ful kunnyngely these lordes twoo he grette,
 And did his message, askynge hem anoon
 If they were broken, or aught woo begoon,

¹ Guido de Colonna, author of *Historia Trojana*, a work which Chaucer evidently collated with those of Ovid. ² Cliffs. ³ Know
⁴ Goodness. ⁵ Cockboat.

Or hadde nede of lodesmen¹ or vitayle ;
For socoure they shulde nothings fayle,
For it was outerly the quenes wille.

Jason ansuerde mekely and stille ;
" My lady," quod he, " thanke I hertely 1490
Of hire goodnesse ; us nedeth trewely
Nothing as now, but that we very bee,
And come for to pley out of the see,
Til that the wynde be better in oure weye."

This lady rometh by the clyffe to pleye
With hire meynee, endelonge the stronde,
And fyndeth this Jason and thyse other stonde
In spekyng of this thinge, as I yow tolde.

This Ercules and Jason gan beholde
How that the queene it was, and faire hir grette,
Anoon ryght as they with this lady mette. 1501
And she tooke hede, and knywe by hire man-
ere,

By hire array, by wordes, and by chere,
That hit were gentil men of grete degree.
And to the castel with hir ledeth shee
These straunge folke, and dooth hem grete
honour ;

And axeth hem of travaylle and labour
That they han suffred in the salte see ;
So that withynne a day or two or three
She knywe by the folke that in his shippes
bee, 1510

That hyt was Jason, full of renomee,²

¹ Pilots. Cf. *Canterbury Tale* l 403. ² Renown.

She sholde lede with this lusty knyghte ! 1540
 And all this was compassed ¹ on the nyghte
 Betwix him Jason, and this Ercules.
 Of these twoo here was a shrewede les,²
 To come to house upon an innocent, —
 For, to bedote ³ this queene was her entent.

This Jason is as coy as ys a mayde ;
 He loketh pitously, but noght he sayde,
 But freely gafe he to hir counselleres
 Giftes grete, and to hire officeres,
 As God wolde that I leyser had and tyme,
 By processe al his wowyng for to ryme ! 155
 But in this house yf any fals lover be,
 Ryght as himselfe now dothe, ryght so did he,
 With feynynge, and with every sotil dede.
 Ye gete no more of me, but ye wol rede
 The original that telleth al the cas.

The sothe is this, that Jason weddid was
 Unto this queene, and toke of hire substaunce
 What-so him lyste unto hys purveyaunce ;
 And upon hir begate he children twoo, 1560
 And drough his saylle, and saugh hir never
 moo.

A letter ⁴ sente she to hym certeyn,
 Which were to longe to written and to seyn ;
 And him repreveth of his grete untrouthe,
 And prayeth him on hir to have some routhe.
 And of his children two, she sayede him this :
 That they be lyke of alle thinge, ywis,

¹ Continued. ² Wicked lie. ³ Deceive. ⁴ *Heroides*, epistle vi

To Jason, save they couthe nat begile.
 And prayede God, or hit were longe while,
 That she that had his herte yrefte hir fro 1570
 Most him fynden to hir untrewes alsoo ;
 And that she moste booth hir children spille,¹
 And alle thoo ² that suffreth hym his wille ;
 And trewe to Jason was she al hir lyve,
 And ever kept hir chaste, as for his wyve ;
 And hadde never she joye at hir herte,
 But dyede for his love of sorwes smerte.

To Colcos comen is this duke Jason,
 That is of love devourer and dragoun,
 As nature appeteth ³ forme alwey, 1580
 And from a forme to forme it passen may ;
 Or as a welle that were botomeles,
 Ryght so kan Jason ne have no pes,
 For to desiren, thurgh his appetite,
 To doon with gentil wymmen hys delyte ;
 This is his luste, and his felicite.

Jason is romed forthe to the cite,
 That whylom cleped was Jasonicos,
 That was the maister ⁴ toun of al Colcos,
 And hath ytolde the cause of his comynge 1590
 Unto Æetes, of that contree kynge ;
 Praynge him that he moste doon his assay
 To gete the flese of golde, yf that he may.
 Of which the kynge assentith to hys bone,⁵
 And dothe him honour as hyt is to done,

¹ Lose. These imprecations are from Ovid. ² Those. ³ Desireth (Lat. *petere*, to seek to obtain). ⁴ Chief. ⁵ Boon.

So ferforthe, that his doghtre and his eyre,
Medea, which that was so wise and feyre,
'That feyrer saugh ther never man with ye,
He made hire doone to Jason companye
Atte mete, and sitte by him in the hall. 1600

Now was Jason a semely man withalle,
And like a lorde, and had a grete renoun,
And of his loke as rial¹ as lyoun,
And goodly of his speche, and famulere,²
And koude of love al crafte and arte plenere³
Withoute boke, and everyche observaunce.
And as fortune hir oughte⁴ a foule meschaunce,
She wex enamoured upon this man.

"Jason," quod she, "for oght I se or kan,
As of this thinge the whiche ye ben aboute,
Ye, and your-selfe ye put in moche doute;⁵
For who-so wol this aventure acheve, 1612
He may nat wele asterten,⁶ as I leve,⁷
Withouten dethe, but I his helpe be.
But nathelesse, hit ys my wille," quod she,
"To furtheren yow, so that ye shal nat dye,
But turne sounde home to youre Tessalye."

"My ryghte lady," quod thys Jason, "thoo,
That ye han of my dethe or of my woo
Any rewarde,⁸ and doon me this honour, 1620
I wote wel that my myght, ne my labour,
May not deserve hit in my lyves day;
God thanke yow, ther I ne kan nor may.

¹ Royal. ² Easy-mannered. ³ Fully. ⁴ Owed. ⁵ Danges
⁶ Escape. ⁷ Believe. ⁸ Regard.

Youre man am I, and louly yow beseche
 To ben my helpe, withoute more speche ;
 But certes for my dethe shal I not spare."

Thoo gan this Medea to him declare
The peril of this case, fro poynt to poynte
Of hys batayle, and in what disjoynthe
He mote stonde ; of whiche no creature 1630
Save oonly she ne myght hys lyfe assure.
And shortely, ryght to the poynt to goo,
They been accorded ful betwex hem two,
That Jason shal hir wedde, as trewe knyght,
And terme ysette to come soone at nyght
Unto hir chambre, and make there hys oothe
Upon the goddys, that he for leve ne loothe
Ne shulde hire never falsen, nyght ne day,
To ben hir husbonde while he lyve may, 1639
As she that from hys dethe hym saved there.

And here upon at nyght they mete yfere,
And doth his oothe, and goothe with hir to
bedde,

And on the morwe upwarde he him spedde,
For she hath taught him how he shal not faile
The flese to wynde, and stynten hys batayle ;
And saved him his lyfe and his honour,
And gate a name as a conquerour,
Ryght thurgh the sleight of hir enchauntement.

Now hath Jason the fleese, and home ys went
With Medea, and tresoures ful grete woone ;
But unwiste of hir fader she is goone¹ 1651

To Tessalye, with duke Jason hir leefe,
That afterwarde hath broght hir to myschefe.
For as a traytour he ys from hire goo,
And with hir lefte yonge children twoo,
And falsly hath betrayed hir, allas!
And ever in love a cheve¹ traytour he was;
And wedded yet the thridde wife anon,
That was the doghtre² of kynge Creon.

This ys the mede of lovyng and guerdoun,
That Medea receyved of Jasoun 1661
Ryght for hir trouthe, and for hir kyndenesse,
That loved hym beter thane hir-selfe, I gesse;
And left hir fadir and hire heritage.
And of Jason this is the vassalage,³
That in hys dayes nas never noon yfounde
So fals a lover goynge on the grounde.
And therfore in her letter thus she sayde,
First whan she of hys falsnesse hym umbrayde.⁴
“Why lykede⁵ me thy yelow heere to see, 1670
More than the boundes of myn honeste?
Why lykede me thy youthe and thy fairenesse,
And of thy tonge the infynyte graciousnesse?
O, haddest thou in thy conquest ded ybe,
Ful mykel untrouthe had ther dyed with the!”
Wel kan Ovyde hir letter in verse endyte,⁶
Which were as now to longe for me to write.

Explicit Legenda Ysiphile et Medee, Martirum.

¹ Chief. ² That is, Creusa. ³ Courage. Cf. *Canterbury Tales* 3054. ⁴ Upbraided. ⁵ Pleased. ⁶ *Heroides*, xii. 11.

Incipit Legenda Lucrecie, Rome, Martiris.

Now mote I sayne thexilynge of kynges
 Of Rome, for the horrible doynges
 Of the laste kynge Tarquynyus, 1680
 As saythe Ovyde, and Titus Lyvyus.¹
 But for that cause telle I nat thys story,
 But for to preysen, and drawen to memory
 The verray wife, the verray Lucesse,
 That for hir wifehode, and hir stedfastnesse,
 Nat oonly that these payens² hir comende,
 But he that ycleped ys in oure legende
 The grete Austyne³ hath grete compassyoun
 Of this Lucesse that starfe in Rome toun.
 And in what wise I wol but shortly trete, 1690
 And of this thyng I touche wil but the grete.⁴

Whan Ardea beseged was aboute
 With Romaines, that ful sterne were and stoute,
 Ful longe lay the sege, and lytel wroghten,
 So that they were halfe ydel, as hem thoghten.
 And in his pley Tarquynyus⁵ the yonge
 Gan for to jape, for he was lyghte of tonge ;
 And sayde that hyt was an ydel lyfe ;
 No man dide ther more than hys wife.
 “And lat us speke of wives that is best ; 1700

¹ The oft-repeated tale of the rape of Lucretia, the wife of Tarquinius Collatinus, is found in Livy's history, i. 55, etc. ; and Ovid's *Fasti*, ii. 741, etc. The story belongs to the reign of Tarquinius Superbus, who was at the time besieging Ardea, near Rome. ² Pagans. ³ St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo. ⁴ Substance. ⁵ Tarquinius Sextus, cousin of Tarquinius Collatinus.

Preise every man hys owne as him lest,
And with oure speche let us ease oure herte.”

A knyght, that highte Colatyne, up sterte,
And sayde thus : “Nay, for hit ys no nede
To trowen on the worde, but on the dede.
I have a wife,” quod he, “that as I trowe
Ys holden good of al that ever hir knowe.
Go we to Rome, to nyght, and we shul se.”
Tarquynyus answerde, “That lyketh¹ me.”

To Rome they be come, and faste hem dighte
To Colatynes house, and doun they lyghte, 1711
Tarquynyus, and eke this Colatyne.

The housbonde knywe the estres² wel and
fyne,

And ful prevely into the house they goon,
For at the gate porter was there noon :
And at the chambre dore they abyde.
This noble wyfe sat by hir beddys syde
Disshevely, for no malice³ she ne thoghte,
And softe wolfe, sayeth our boke, that she
wroghte,

To kepen hir fro slouthe and ydilnesse ; 1720
And bad hir servauntes doon hir besynesse ;
And axeth hem, “What tydynges heren ye ?
How sayne men of the sege ? how shal yt be ?
God wolde the walles werne⁴ falle adoune !
Myn housbonde ys to longe out of this toun,
For which the drede doth me so to smerte ;
Ryght as a swerde hyt styngeth to myn herte,

¹ Pleaseth. ² Passages ³ Evil. ⁴ Were.

Whan I thenke on these or of that place.
God save my lorde, I pray him for his grace!"

And therwithalle ful tendirly she wepe, 173^c
And of hir werke she toke no more kepe,
But mekely she let hire eyen falle,
And thilke semblant sat¹ hir wel withalle.
And eke the teeres ful of hevyytee
Embelysshed hire wifely chastitee.
Hire countenance ys to her herte digne,
For they acordeden in dede and in signe.
And with that worde hir husbonde Colatyne,
Or she of him was ware, come stertyng ynne,
And sayede, "Drede the noght, for I am here!"
And she anoon up roos, with blysful chere, 174¹
And kyssed hym, as of wyves ys the wone.²

Tarquynyus, this prowde kynges sone,
Conceyved hath hir beaute and hir chere,
Hire yelow heer, hir bounte, and hire manere,
Hir hywe,³ hir wordes that she hath compleyned,
And by no craft hire beaute was not feyned;
And kaughte to this lady suche desire,
That in his herte brent as any fire
So wodely that hys witte was forgeten, 175^o
For wel he thoghte she shulde nat be geten.
And ay the more he was in dispaire,
The more he covetyth, and thoght hir faire;
Hys blynde lust was al hys covetynge.

On morwe, whan the brid began to synge,
Unto the sege he cometh ful pryvely,

¹ Appearance became. ² Wont. ³ Hue.

And by himselfe he walketh sobrelly,
 The ymage of hir recordyng alwey newe :
 " Thus lay hir heer, and thus fressh was hir
 hewe ; "

" Thus sate, thus spake, thus spanne, this was
 hir chere ; " 1760

" Thus faire she was, and thys was hir manere. "

Al this conceyte hys herte hath new ytake,
 And as the see, with tempeste al to-shake,
 That after whan the storme ys al agoo,
 Yet wol the watir quappe ¹ a day or twoo ;
 Ryght so, thogh that hir forme were absent,
 The plesaunce of hir forme was present.

But natheles, nat plesaunce, but delyte,
 Or an unryghtful talent ² with dispite, — 1769

" For mawgree ³ hir, she shal my lemman ⁴ be :

Happe helpeth hardy man alway, " quod he,

" What ende that I make, hit shal be soo ! "

And gyrt hym with his swerde, and gan to goo,

And he forthe-ryght til he to Rome ys come,

And al allon hys way than hath he nome ⁵

Unto the hous of Colatyne ful ryght.

Doune was the sonne, and day hath lost hys
 lyght,

And inne he come unto a prevy halke, ⁶

And in the nyght ful thefely gan he stalke, ⁷

Whan every wyght was to hys reste broght,

Ne no wyghte had of tresoun suche a thoght.

¹ Cf. l. 865. ² Inclination. ³ In spite of. ⁴ Mistress. ⁵ Taken
 Corner. ⁷ Cf. Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece*, l. 365.

Whether by wyndow, or by other gynne,¹ 1782
 With swerde ydrawe, shortly he cometh ynne
 There as she lay, thys noble wyfe Lucesse,
 And as she woke, hir bed she felte presse.
 "What best ys that," quod she, "that weyeth
 thus?"

"I am the kynges sone Tarquynus,"
 Quod he, "but and thow crye, or noyse make,
 Or yf thou any creature awake,
 Be thilke God that formede man on lyve. 1790
 This swerde thurgh thyn herte shal I ryve."
 And therwithal unto hir throte he sterte,
 And sette the swerde al sharpe unto hir herte.

No worde she spake, she hath no myght
 therto,

What shal she sayne? hir wytte ys al agoo!
 Ryght as a wolfe that fint a lomb allone,
 To whom shal she compleyne or make mone?
 What! shal she fyghte with an hardy knyghte?
 Wel wote men a woman hath no myghte.
 What! shal she crye, or how shal she asterte,²
 That hath hir by the throte, with swerde at
 herte? 1801

¶ he axeth grace, and seyde al that she kan.

"Ne wolt thou nat?" quod this cruelle man
 "As wisly³ Jupiter my soule save!
 I shal in the stable slee thy knave,
 And lay him in thy bed, and lowde crye,
 That I the fynde in suche avowtrye;

¹ Contrivance ² Escape. ³ Surely.

And thus thou shalt be ded, and also lese
Thy name, for thou shalt not chese." 1809

Thise Romaynes wyfes loveden so hir ¹ name
At thilke tyme, and dredden so the shame,
That, what for fere of sklaundre, and drede of
dethe,

She loste both attones wytte and brethe ;
And in a swowgh she lay, and woxe so ded,
Men myghten smyten of hir arme or hed,
She feleth nothinge, neither foule ne feyre.

Tarquynys, thou art a kynges eyre,
And sholdest as by lynage and by ryght
Doon as a lorde and as a verray knyght ;
Why hastow doon dispite to chevalrye ? 1820
Why hastow doon thys lady vylanye ?
Allas, of the thys was a vilenouse dede !

But now to the purpose ; in the story I rede
Whan he was goon al this myschaunce ys falle.
Thys lady sent aftir hir frendes alle,
Fader, moder, housbonde, alle yfere, ²
And dysshevelee with hir heere clere,
In habyte suche as wymmen usede thoo
Unto the buryinge of hir frendes goo,
She sytte in halle with a sorowful syghte. 1830
Hir frendes axen what hir aylen myghte,
And who was dede, and she sytte aye wepynge.
A worde for shame ne may she forthe out
bryge,
Ne upon hem she durste nat beholde,

¹ Their. ² Together.

But atte laste of Tarquyny she hem tolde
This rewful case, and al thys thing horryble.

The woo to telle hyt were impossible
That she and al hir frendes made attones.
Al hadde folkes hertys ben of stones,
Hyt myght have maked hem upon hir rewe,
Hire herte was so wyfely and so trewe. 184
She sayde that for hir gylt ne for hir blame
Hir housbonde shulde nat have the foule name
That nolde she nat suffren by no wey.
And they answerde alle unto hir fey,¹
That they forgaf hyt hyr, for hyt was ryght ;
Hyt was no gilt ; hit lay not in hir myght,
And seyden hire ensamples many oon.
But al for noght, for thus she seyde anoon :
“Be as be may,” quod she, “of forgyfyng ;
I wol not have noo forgyft for nothinge.” 185
But pryvely she kaughte forth a knyfe,
And therwithalle she rafte ² hir-selfe hir lyfe ;
And as she felle adoun she kaste hire loke,
And of hir clothes yet hede she toke ;
For in hir fallynge yet she hadde care,
Lest that hir fete or suche thyng lay bare,
So wel she lovede clenness,³ and eke trouthe !
Of hir had al the toune of Rome routhe,
And Brutus ⁴ hath by hir chaste bloode swore,
That Tarquyny shulde ybanysshed be therfore,
And al hys kynne ; and let the peple calle,⁵

¹ Faith. ² Bereft. ³ Purity, decency. ⁴ Lucius Junius Brutus
the founder of the great house. ⁵ Caused the people to be called.

And openly the tale he tolde hem alle ; 1863
 And openly let cary her on a bere
 Thurgh al the toun, that men may see and
 here

The horryble dede of hir oppressyoun.
 Ne never was ther kynge in Rome toun
 Syn thilke day ; and she was holden there
 A seynt, and ever hir day yhalwed dere,
 As in hire lawe. And thus endeth Lucesse
 The noble wyfe, Titus¹ beryth wittnesse. 1871

I telle hyt, for she was of love so trewe,
 Ne in hir wille she chaungede for no newe,
 And in hir stable herte, sadde² and kynde,
 That in these wymmen men may al day fynde.
 Ther as they kaste hire herte, there it dwelleth.
 For wel I wot that Criste himself telleth,
 That in Israel, as wyde as is the londe,
 That so grete feythe in al the londe he ne
 fonde,

As in a woman ; and this is no lye. 1880
 And as for men, loketh which tyrannye
 They doon al day, — assay hem who-so lyste,
 The trewest ys ful brotil³ for to triste.

Explicit Legenda Lucrecie, Rome, Martiris.

¹ Tites Livius. Firm. ² Brittle.

Incipit Legenda Adriane de Athenes.

Juge infernal Mynos,¹ of Crete king,
Now cometh thy lotte, now comestow on the
rynge !

Nat oonly for thy sake writen ys this story,
But for to clepe ageyn unto memory
Of Theseus, the grete untrewē of love,
For which the goddis of heven above 1889
Ben wrothe, and wreche han take for thy synne.
Be rede for shame ! now I thy lyfe begynne.

Mynos, that was the myghty kynge of Crete,
That wan an hundred citees stronge and grete,
To scle hath sent hys sone Androgeus
To Athenes, of the which hyt happeth thus,
That he was slayne, lernynge philosophie,
Ryght in that citee, nat but for envye.

The grete Mynos, of the whiche I speke,
His sones dethe ys come for to wreke, —
Alcathoë² besegeth harde and longe ; 1900
But natheles, the walles be so stronge,
And Nysus, that was kynge of that citee,
So chevalrouse, that lytel dredeth he ;
Of Mynos or hys oste toke he no cure.
Til, on a day, befel an aventure,
That Nisus doghtre³ stode upon the walle,

¹ Minos, king of Crete, is called "infernal" because he became one of the judges in Hades. The story of Ariadne is outlined in Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, viii. 152, and related at length by Plutarch; and her letter to Theseus is in the *Heroides*, x. ² Megara, of which Nisus was king. ³ Scylla.

And of the sege sawe the maner alle.
 So hyt happede, that at a skarmysshynge,
 She caste hir hert upon Mynos the kyng,
 For hys beaute, and hys chevalerye, 1910
 So sore, that she wende for to dye.

And, shortly of this processe for to pace,
 She made Mynos wynnen thilke place,
 So that the citee was al at his wille,
 To saven whom hym lyst, or elles spille.¹
 But wikkidly he quytte her kyndenesse,
 And let hir drenche in sorowe and distresse,
 Ner that the goddys had of hir pite ;
 But that tale were to longe as now for me.

Athenes wanne this kyng Mynos also, 1920
 As Alcathoe and other tounes mo ;
 And this theeffect, that Mynos hath so dryven
 Hem of Athenes, that they mote hym given
 Fro yere to yere hir owene children dere
 For to be slayne, as ye shal after here.

Thys Mynos hath a monstre,² a wikked beste,
 That was so cruelle that withouten areste,
 Whan that a man was broght into hys presence.
 He wolde hym ete ; ther helpeth no defence.
 And every thridde yere, withouten doute, 1930
 They casten lotte, as hyt came aboute,
 On ryche, on pore, he most hys sone take,
 And of hys childe he moste present make
 To Mynos, to save him or to spille,
 Or lat his best devoure him at his wille.

Destroy. ² The Minotaur, confined in the Cnossian labyrinth

And this hath Mynos doon right in dyspite ;
 To wreke hys sone was sette all his delyte,
 And maken hem of Athenes hys thralle
 Fro yere to yere, while he lyven shalle ;
 And home he saileth whan this toune ys wonne
 This wikked custome is so longe yronne, 1941
 Til of Athenes kynge Egeus
 Moste senden his oune sone Theseus,
 Sith that the lotte is fallen hym upon,
 To be devoured, for grace is ther non.
 And forth is lad thys woful yonge knyght
 Unto the countree of kynge Mynos full of
 myght,

And in a prison fetred faste ys he,
 Til the tyme he shulde yfreten ¹ be.

Wel maystow wepe, O woful Theseus, 1950
 That art a kynges sone, and dampned thus !
 Me thynketh this, that thow depe were yholde ²
 To whom that savede the fro cares colde.
 And now yf any woman helpe the,
 Wel oughtestow hir servant for to be,
 And ben hir trewe lover yere by yere !
 But now to come agayn to my matere.

The tour, ther this Theseus ys ythrowe,
 Doune in the bothome derke, and wonder lowe,
 Was joynynge to the walle of a foreyne, ³ 1960
 And hyt was longynge to the doghtren tweyne
 Of Mynos, that in hire chambres grete
 Dweltene above the maystre ⁴ strete

¹ Eaten. ² Would be much beholden. ³ Jakes. ⁴ Chief.

Of Athenes¹ in joy and in solace.
 Wot I not how hyt happede parcase,²
 As Theseus compleyned hym by nyghte,
 The kynges doghtre that Adriane hyghte,
 And eke hir suster Phedra, herden alle
 Hys complevnt, as they stode on the walle,
 And loked upon the bryght mone ; 1970
 Hem liste nat goo to bedde so sone.
 And of hys woo they hadde compassyoun ;
 A kynges sone to be in swiche prisoun,
 And be devoured, thoughte hem grete pitee.

Than Adriane spake to hir suster free,
 And seyde, " Phedra, leve suster dere,
 This woful lordes sone may ye not here,
 How pitously compleyneth he hys kynne,
 And eke his pore estate that he ys ynne ?
 And gilteles ; hit ys now certes routhe ! 1980
 And yf ye wol assente by my trouthe,
 He shal be holpen, how soo that we doo."

Phedra answerde, " Ywys, me ys as woo
 For him, as ever I was for any man ;
 And to his helpe the beste rede that I kan,³
 Ys, that we doon the gayler prively
 To come and speke with us hastely,
 And doon this woful man with him to come ;
 For yf he may the monstre overcome,
 Than were he quyte ; ther ys noon other bote !⁴
 Lat us wel taste⁵ him at hys herte rote, 1991

¹ Of course this city should be Crete. ² Perchance. ³ Advice
 that I know. ⁴ Remedy ⁵ Touch (O. Fr. *taster*).

And him avaunce at home in his contree, 2020
Syn that soo grete a lordes sone ys he.

Thys ys my rede,¹ yf that ye dar hyt take ;
What shulde I lenger sermoun of hyt make ?"

The gayler cometh, and with hym Theseus ;

Whan these thynges ben acorded thus,

Doune sytte Theseus upon hys knee,

"The ryghte lady of my lyfe," quod he,

"I sorwful man, ydampned to the deth,

Fro yow, whiles that me lasteth breth,

I wol not twynne aftir this aventure. 2030

But in youre servise thus I wol endure ;

That as a wrechche unknowe I wol yow serve

For evermore, til that myn herte sterve.

Forsake I wol at home myn herytage,

And, as I sayde, ben of youre courte a page,

Yf that ye vouchesafe that in this place,

Ye graunte me to have suche a grace,

That I may have not ² but my mete and drinke ;

And for my sustenaunce yet wol I swynke,³

Ryght as yow lyst ; that Mynos, ne no wyght,

Syn that he sawe me never with eighen syght,

Ne no man elles shal me konne espye, 2042

So slyly and so wele I shal me gye,⁴

And me so wel disfigure, and so lowe,

That in this worlde ther shal no man me knowe,

To han my lyfe, and to have presence

Of yow, that doon to me this excellence.

And to my fader shal I sende here

¹ Advice ² Nought ³ Labor. ⁴ Guide.

This worthy man that is your gaylere,
 And him so guerdone that he shal wel bee 2050
 Oon of the gretest men of my contree.
 And gif I durste sayne, my lady bryght,
 I am a kynges sone and eke a knyght,
 As wolde God, gif that hyt myghte bee,
 Ye weren in my contree alle three,
 And I with yow, to bere yow companye.
 Than shulde ye seen yf that I therof lye.

“And yf that I profre yow in lowe manere
 To ben youre page and serven yow ryght here,
 But I yow serve as lowly in that place, 2060
 I prey to Marce¹ to geve me suche grace,
 That shames dede on me ther mote falle,
 And dethe and poverte to my frendes alle,
 And that my spirite be² nyghte mote goo
 After my dethe, and walke to and froo,
 That I mote of traytoure have a name,
 For which my spirite mot goo to do me shame !
 And gif ever I clayme other degre,
 But ye vouchesafe to geve hyt me,
 As I have seyde, of shames deth I deye ! 2070
 And mercy, lady ! I kan no more seye.”

A semely knyght was this Theseus to see,
 And yonge, but of twenty yere and three.
 But whoso hadde yseen hys contenaunce,
 He wolde have wepte for routhe of his penaunce
 For which this Adriane in this manere
 Answerde to hys profre and to his chere.

¹ Mars. ² By.

"A kynges sone, and eke a knyght," quod she,

"To ben my servant in so lowe degre,
God shelde hit, for the shame of wymmen alle,
And lene¹ me never suche a case befall! 2081
And sende yow grace and sleight of hert also
Yow to defende, and knyghtly sleen your fo!
And lene hereaftir I may yow fynde
To me and to my suster here so kynde,
That I ne repente not to geve yow lyfe!

"Yet wër hyt better I were your wife,
Syn ye ben as gentil borne as I,
And have a realme nat but faste by,
Then that I suffrede your gentillesse to sterve,
Or that I lete yow as a page serve; 2091
Hyt is not profet, as unto youre kynrede.
But what is that man wol not do for drede?
And to my suster syn that hyt is so,
That she mote goon with me yf that I goo,
Or elles suffre deth as wel as I,
That ye unto your sone as trewely,
Doon hir be wedded at your home comynge.
This ys the final ende of al this thyng; 2099
Ye, swere hit here, upon al that may be sworne!"

"Yee, lady myn," quod he, "or elles torne
Mote I be with the M^l.notawre to morowe!
And have here of myn herte bloode to borowe,²
Gif that ye wol! Yf I hadde knyfe or spere,
I wolde hit laten out, and theron swere,

¹ Give, grant. ² Pledge.

For then at erst, I wote ye wol me leve.
 By Mars, that ys chefe of my beleve,
 So that I myghte lyven, and nat fayle
 To morowe for to taken my batayle,
 I nolde never fro this place flee, 2110
 Til that ye shulde the verray prefe see.
 For now, yf that the sothe I shal yow saye,
 I have loved yow ful many a daye,
 Thogh ye ne wiste nat, in my contree,
 And aldermoste desirede yow to see
 Of any erthely lyvyng creature.
 Upon my trouthe I swere and yow assure,
 These seven yere I have your servant bee.
 Now have I yow, and also have ye mee,
 My dere hert, of Athenes¹ duchesse!" 2120

This lady smyleth at his stedfastnesse,
 And at hys hertely wordys, and at his chere,
 And to hir suster sayde in this manere:

"And softly now, suster myn," quod she,
 "Now be we duchesses, both I and ye,
 And sykered to the regals² of Athenes,
 And both heraftir lykly to be queenes,
 And saved fro hys deth a kynges sone,
 As ever of gentil wymen ys the wone³
 To save a gentilman, enforthe⁴ hir myght, 2130
 In honest cause, and namely in his ryght.
 Me thinketh no wyght ought us hereof blame,
 Ne beren us therfore an evel name."

¹ For Theseus was duke of Athens. ² Assured of the regal at-
 tributes. ³ Wont. ⁴ As far as.

And shortly of this matere for to make,
This Theseus of hir hath leve ytake,
And every poynt was performed in dede,
As ye have in the covenant herde me rede ;
Hys wepne, his clyw, hys thing that I have
sayde

Was by the gayler in the house ylayde,
Ther as this Mynatowre hath hys dwellyng, 2140
Ryght faste by the dorre at hys entrynge,
And Theseus ys ladde unto hys dethe ;
And forthe unto this Mynataure he gethe,
And by the techynge of thys Adriane,
He overcome thys beste and was hys bane,
And oute he cometh by the clywe agayne
Ful prively. When he thys beste hath slayne,
And by the gayler gotten hath a barge,
And of his wives tresure gan it charge,
And tok hys wif, and eke hir suster free, 2150
And by the gayler, and wyth hem alle three
Ys stole away out of the londe by nighte,
And to the contree of Ennopye hym dyghte,¹
There as he had a frende of his knowynge.
There festen they, there dauncen they and
synge,

And in hys armes hath thys Adriane,
That of the beste hath kepte him from hys
bane.

And gate him there a noble barge anoon,
And of his countre folke a grete woon,²

Enope (Gerenia), in Messenia, set out. ² Company.

And taketh hys leue, and homewarde sayleth
hee ; 216a

And in an yle, amydde the wilde see,
There as ther dwelleth creature noon
Save wilde bestes, and that ful many oon,
He made his shippe a-londe for to sette,
And in that ile halfe a day he lette,¹
And sayde on the londe he moste him reste.

Hys maryners han don ryght as hym leste ;
And, for to telle schortly in thys case,
Whanne Adriane hys wyfe aslepe was,
For that hir suster fairer was than she, 2170
He taketh hir in hys honde, and forth gooth he
To shyppe, and as a traytour stale hys way,
While that thys Adriane aslepe lay,
And to hys contree-warde he sayleth blyve, —
A twenty devel way the wynde him dryve ! —
And fonde hys fader drenched in the see.
Me lyste no more to speke of hym, *pardee* !
These false lovers, poyson be her bane !

But I wol turne ageyne to Adryane,
That ys with slepe for werynesse ytake ; 2180
Ful sorwfully hir herte may awake.
Allas, for the myn herte hath pitee !
Ryght in the dawenyng awake the shee,
And gropeth² in the bed, and fonde ryght
nought.

"Allas," quod she, "that ever I was wroght,

¹ Waited ² Searcheth. From this line to the end Chaucer follows Ovid in the *Heroides* quite closely.

I am betrayed," and hir heer to-rente,
And to the stronde barefote faste she wente,
And cryede, "Theseus ! myn herte swete !
Where be ye, that I may not wyth yow mete ?
And myghte thus with bestes ben yslayne."

The holowe roches answerde hir agayne.¹
No man she sawe, and yet shone the mone,
And hye upon a rokke she wente sone, 2193
And saw hys barge saylynge in the see.
Colde waxe hir hert, and ryght thus sayde
she :

"Meker than ye fynde I the bestes wilde !" —
Hath he not synne, that he hir thus begylde ! —
She cried, "O turne agayne for routhe and
synne,

Thy barge hath not al thy meyny² ynne."
Hir kerchefe on a pole stykede shee, 2200
Ascaunce³ that he shulde hyt wel ysee,
And hym remembre that she was behynde,
And turne agayne, and on the stronde hir
fynde.

But al for noght ; hys wey he ys i-goon,
And doune she felle a-swowne on a stoon ;
And up she ryste, and kyssed in al hir care
The steppes of hys fete, there he hath fare,
And to hir bedde ryght thus she speketh
thoo :

"Thow bedd," quoth she, "that haste re-
ceyved twoo,

¹ This is from Ovid. ² Retinue. ³ As chance.

Thow shalt answere of twoo and not of oon,
 Where ys the gretter parte away i-goon? 2211
 Allas, where shal I wreched wyght become?
 For though so be that hote noon here come.
 Home to my contree dar I not for drede;
 I kan my selfe in this case not rede."¹

What shulde I telle more hir compleynynge?
 Hyt ys so longe hyt were an hevy thyng.
 In hyr Epistil Naso² telleth alle,
 But shortly to the ende tel I shalle.
 The goddys have hir holpen for pitee, 2220
 And in the sygne of Taurus men may see
 The stones of hir corowne shyne clere;
 I wol no more speke of thys matere.
 But thus these false loveres kan begyle
 Hire trewe love, the devel quyte hym hys
 while!³

Explicit Legenda Adriane de Athenes.

Incipit Legenda Philomene.

Thow giver of the formes, that hast wrought
 The faire worlde, and bare hit in thy thoght
 Eternally or⁴ thow thy werke beganne,
 Why madest thow unto the sklaunder of
 manne, —
 Or al be that hyt was not thy doyinge, 223c
 As for that fine⁵ to make suche a thyng, —

¹ Counsel. ² Ovid. ³ Time. ⁴ Ere. ⁵ End.

Why suffrest thou that Tereus¹ was bore,
 That ys in love so fals and so forswore,
 That fro thys worlde up to the firste hevene
 Corrupeth, whan that folke hys name nev-
 ene?²

And as to me, so grisly was hys dede,
 That whan that I this foule story rede.
 Myn eyen wexen foule and sore also ;
 Yet laste the venym of so longe ago,
 That infecteth hym that wolde beholde 2240
 The story of Tereus, of which I tolde.

Of Trase was he lorde, and kynne to Marte,
 The cruelle god that stante with bloody darte,
 And wedded hadde he, with blisful chere,
 King Pandynes faire doghter dere,
 That hyghte Proygne, floure of hir contree ;
 Thogh Juno luste nat at the feste bee,
 Ne Ymeneus, that god of wedding is.
 But at the feste redy ben, ywys, 2249
 The Furies thre, with al hire mortel bronde.³
 The owle at nyght about the balkes wonde,⁴
 That prophete ys of woo and of myschaunce.
 This revel, ful of songe, and ful of daunce,
 Laste a fourtenyght or lytel lasse.
 But shortly of this story for to passe, —
 For I am wery of hym for to telle, —
 Fyve yere hys wyfe and he togedir dwelle ;
 Til on a day she gan so sore longe

¹ The story of Tereus, king of Thrace, and Philomela, daughter of Pandion, king of Athens, is related in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, vi 412-676. ² Name. ³ Brand ⁴ Rafters dwelt.

To seen hir suster, that she sawgh not longe,
 That for desire she nyste what to seye, 2260
 But to hir husbonde gan she for to preye
 For Goddys love, that she moste ones goon
 Hir suster for to seen, and come anoon.
 Or elles but she moste to hyr wende,
 She preyde hym that he wolde aftir hir sende.
 And thys was day be day al hir prayere,
 With al humblesse of wyfehode, worde and
 chere.

This Tereus let make hys shippes yare,¹
 And into Grece hymselfe ys forthe yfare, 2269
 Unto hys fader in lawe, and gan hym preye,
 To vouche-safe that for a moneth or tweye,
 That Philomene, his wyfes suster, myghte
 On Proigne hys wyfe but ones have a syghte ;
 “ And she shal come to yow agayne anoon,
 My selfe with hyr, I wil bothe come and goon,
 And as myn hertes lyfe I wol hir kepe.”

Thys olde Pandeon, thys kynge, gan wepe
 For tendernesse of herte for to leve
 Hys doghtre goon, and for to give hir leve ;
 Of al thys worlde he lovede nothinge soo ; 2280
 But at the laste leve hath she to go.
 For Philomene with salte teres eke
 Gan of hir fader grace to beseke,
 To seen hir sustre that hir longeth soo,
 And hym embraceth with hir armes twoo.
 And ther-with-alle so yonge and faire was she,

¹ Ready. Cf. *The Tempest*, act 1, sc. 1, l. 7.

That whan that Tereus sawgh hir beaute,
 And of array that ther nas noon hir lyche,
 And yet of bounte¹ was she too so ryche,
 He caste hys fiery hert upon hir soo, 2290
 That he wol have hir how-soo that hyt goo,
 And with hys wiles kneled and so preyde,
 Til at the laste Pandeon thus seyde :

“ Now, sone,” quod he, “that arte to me so
 dere,

I the betake² my yonge doghtre dere,
 That bereth the key of al myn hertes lyfe.
 And grete wel my doghter and thy wyfe,
 And geve hir leve sommetyme for to pleye,
 That she may seen me oones or I deye.” 2299
 And sothely he hath made him ryche feste,
 And to hys folke, the moste and eke the leste,
 That with him come ; and gaf him geftes grete,
 And him conveyeth thurgh the maistir³ streté
 Of Athenes, and to the see him broghte,
 And turneth home ; no malyce⁴ he ne thoghte.
 The ores pulleth forthe the vessel faste,
 And into Trace arryveth at the laste ;
 And up into a forest he hir ledde,
 And into a cave pryvely hym spedde,
 And in this derke cave, gif hir leste, 2310
 Or leste noght, he bad hir for to reste ;
 Of which hir hert agrosse,⁵ and seyde thus :

“ Where ys my suster, brother Tereus ? ”

And therewithal she wepte tendirly,

¹ Goodness. ² Commit. ³ Chief. ⁴ Evil. ⁵ Shuddered

And quok for fere, pale and pitously,
 Ryghte as the lambe that of the wolfe ys byten,
 Or as the colver¹ that of thegle ys smyten,
 And ys out of his clawes forthe escaped,
 Yet hyt ys aferde and awhaped²
 Lest hit be hent³ eftsones : so sate she. 2320
 But utterly hyt may none other be,
 By force hath this traytour done a dede,
 That he hathe refte hir hir maydenhede
 Maugree hir hede, be strengthe and by his
 myght.

Loo, heere a dede of men, and that aryght !
 She crieth " Suster ! " with ful longe stevene,⁴
 And " Fader dere ! Helpe me, God in hev-
 ene ! "

Al helpeth nat. And yet this false thefe
 Hath doon thys lady yet a more myschefe,
 For ferde lest she sholde hys shame crye, 2330
 And done hym openly a vilanye,
 And with his swerde hire tonge of kerf he,
 And in a castel made hir for to be
 Ful prively in prison evermore,
 And kept hir to his usage and to hys store,
 So that she ne mighte never more asterte.⁵

O sely Philomene, woo ys in thyn herte !
 Huge ben thy sorwes, and wonder smerte !
 God wreke the, and sende the thy bone !
 Now ys hyt tyme I make an ende sone. 2340
 This Tereus ys to hys wyfe ycome,

¹ Dove. ² Confused. ³ Caught ⁴ Note. ⁵ Escape.

And in hyse armes hath hys wyfe ynome,¹
 And pitously he wepe, and shoke hys hede,
 And swore hire that he fonde hir suster dede ;
 For whiche the sely Proigne hath suche woo,
 That nighe hire sorwful herte brake atwoo.
 And thus in teres lat I Proigne dwelle,
 And of hir suster forthe I wol yow telle.

This woful lady ylerned had in yowthe,
 So that she werken and enbrowden kowthe,
 And weven in stole the radevore,² 2351
 As hyt of wymmen hath be woved yore.
 And, shortly for to seyn, she hath hir fille
 Of mete and drynke, of clothyng at hire wille,
 And kouthe eke rede wel ynogh and endyte,
 But with a penne she kouthe nat write ;
 But letteres kan she weve to and froo,
 So thate by the yere was agoo,
 She hadde woven in a stames large,³
 How she was broght from Athenes in a barge,
 And in a cave how that she was broght, 2361
 And al the thinge that Tereus hath wrought,
 She wave⁴ hyt wel, and wrote the story above,
 How she was served for hir suster love.
 And to a knave⁵ a rynge she gaf anoon,
 And prayed hym by signes for to goon
 Unto the quene, and beren hir that clothe ;
 And by sygne sworne many an othe,
 She shulde hym geve what she geten myghte.

¹ Taken. ² Tapestry. ³ Large piece of cloth (Lat. *stamen*, & weaver's warp). ⁴ Wove. ⁵ Boy (Ger. *knabe*).

Thys knave anoon unto the queene hym
 dyghte, 2370
 And toke hit hir, and al the maner tolde.
 And whanne that Proigne hath this thing be-
 holde,
 No worde she spake for sorwe and eke for rage
 But feyned hyr to goon on pilgrimage
 To Bachus temple. And in a lytel stounde ¹
 Hire dombe suster syttyng hath she founde
 Wepyng in the castel hir-self allone.
 Allas, the woo, constreynt, and eke the mone
 That Proigne upon hir dombe suster maketh !
 In armes everych of hem other taketh ; 2380
 And thus I lat hem in her sorwe dwelle.

The remnant ys no charge ² for to telle,
 For this is al and somme, — thus was she
 served,
 That harm agylte ³ ne deservede
 Unto thys cruelle man, that she of wyste.
 Ye may be war of men gif that yow lyste.
 For al be that he wol not for the shame
 Doon as Tereus, to lese hys name,
 Ne serve yow as a morderere or a knave, 2389
 Ful lytel while shul ye trewe hym have, —
 That wol I seyne, al were he nowe my brother, --
 But hit so be that he may have another.

Explicit Legenda Philomene.

¹ Time. ² Consequence. ³ Committed.

Incipit Legenda Phillis.

By preve, as wel as by auctorite,
That wikked frute cometh of wikked tree,¹
That may ye fynde yf that hyt liketh yow.

But for thys ende I speke thys as now,
To telle yow of fals Demophoöne.²
In love a falser herde I never none,
But hit were hys fader Theseus ;
God for hys grace fro suche oon kepe us ! 2400
Thus these wymen prayen that hit here ;
Now to theffect turne I of my matere.

Distroyed ys of Troye the citee ;
This Demophon come saylyng in the see
Towarde Athenes to hys paleys large.
With hym come many a shippe and mony a
barge

Ful of folke, of whiche ful many oon
Ys wounded sore, and seke, and woo begoon,
And they han at a sege longe ylayne.
Byhynde him come a wynde and eke a rayne,
That shofe so sore hys salle myghte not
stonde. 2411

Hym were lever than al the worlde a-londe,
So hunteth hym the tempest to and fro !
So derke hyt was, he kouthe no-wher go,
And with a wawe brosten was hys stere.³

¹ Cf. Matt. vii. 16. ² The legend of Phillis follows pretty closely Ovid's story in the *Heroides*, epistle ii. ³ Rudder.

Hys shippe was rent so lowe, in suche manere,
That carpentere koude hit nat amende.

The see by nyght as any torche brende
For wode,¹ and posseth hym up and doune ;
Til Neptunus hath of hym compassyoun, 2420
And Thetis, Chorus, Triton, and they alle,
And maden him upon a londe to falle,
Wherof that Phillis lady was and quene,
Lycurgus doghtre, fayrer on to sene
Than is the floure ageyn the bryghte sonne.

Unneth² ys Demophoon to londe ywonne,
Wayke and eke wery, and his folke forpyned
Of werynesse, and also enfamyned,
And to the dethe he was almoste ydreven.
Hys wise folke counseyle han hym geven, 2430
To seken helpe and socour of the quene,
And loken what hys grace myghte bene,
And make in that londe somme chevissaunce,³
'To kepen hym fro woo and fro myschaunce.
For seke he was, and almoste at the dethe ;
Unnethe myght he speke, or drawe brethe ;
And lyeth in Rhodopeya⁴ hym for to reste.

Whan he may walke, hym thoght hit was the
beste

Unto the contree to seken for socoure.
Men knewe hym welle and dide hym honoure ;
For at Athenes duke and lorde was hee, 2440
As Theseus hys fader hath ybe,
That in hys tyme was grete of renoun,

¹ Wrath. ² Scarcely. ³ Negotiation. ⁴ A mountain in Thrace.

No man so grete in al hys regioun ;
 And lyke hys fader of face and of stature,
 And fals of love ; hyt came hym of nature,
 As doothe the fox Renarde, the foxes sone ;
 Of kynde ¹ he koude hys olde fadres wone ²
 Withoute lore, as kan a drake swymme
 Whan hit ys kaught and caried to the brymme.

Thys honourable quene doth him chere, 2451
 And lyketh wel hys porte and hys manere.
 But I am agroteyd ³ here beforne,
 To write of hem that in love ben forsworne
 And eke to haste me in my Legende,
 Which to performe, God me grace sende ;
 Therefore I passe shortly in thys wyse.

Ye have wel herde of Theseus the gyse,⁴
 In the betraysyng of faire Adriane,
 That of hir pitee kepte hym fro hys baue. 2460
 At shorte wordes, ryght so Demophone,
 The same way, the same path hath gone,
 That did his false fader Theseus.
 For unto Phillis hath he sworne thus,
 To wedden hir, and hir his trouthe plyghte,
 And piked of hyr al the good he myghte,
 Whan he was hole and sounde, and had hys
 reste,

And doth with Phillis what-so that him leste,
 As wel kouthe I, gif that me leste soo,
 Tellen al hys doynges, to and fro. 2470

He sayede to hys contree moste him sayle,

¹ Nature ² Went. Surfeited. ⁴ Wise.

For ther he wolde hire weddyng apparaylle
 As fille to hir honour and hys also,
 And openly he tok his leve tho,
 And to hir swore he wolde not sojourne,
 But in a moneth ageyn he wolde retourne.
 And in that londe let make hys ordynaunce,
 As verray lorde, and toke the obeisaunce,
 Wel and hombely, and his shippis dyghte,
 And home he gooth the nexte wey he myghte.
 For unto Phillis yet ne come he noght, 2481
 And that hath she so harde and sore ybought,
 Allas, that the story doth us recorde,
 She was hir oun dethe with a corde,
 Whanne that she segh that Demophon her
 trayede.

But firste wrote she to hym,¹ and faste hym
 prayede
 He wolde come and delyver hir of peyne,
 As I reherse shal oo worde or tweyne.
 Me lyst nat vouch-safe on him to swynke,²
 Dispenden on hym a penne ful of ynke, 2490
 For fals in love was he, ryght as hys syre;
 The Devel set hire soules both on a fire!
 But of the letter of Phillis wol I wryte
 A worde or tweyne, althogh hit he but lyte.³

“Thyn hostesse,” quod she, “O Demophoöne.
 Thy Phillis, which that is so woo begone,
 Of Rhodopey,⁴ upon yow mot compleyne,

¹ Her letter is in the *Heroides*. ² Labor. ³ Little. ⁴ “Thy Rhodop: an hostess, Phyllis,” is Ovid’s form of expression.

Over the terme sette betwix us tweyne,
 That ye ne holden forwarde,¹ as ye seyde.
 Your anker, which ye in oure haven leyde, 2500
 Hyght² us that ye wolde comen out of doute,
 Or that the mone ones went aboute ;
 But tymes foure the mone hath hid hir face
 Syn that thylke day ye wente fro this place ;
 And foure tymes lyghte the worlde ageyn.
 But for al that, yet I shal soothly seyn,
 Yet hath the streme of Sithon³ nat i-broght
 From Athenes the shippe ; yet come hit noght.
 And yf that ye the terme rekne wolde,
 As I or other trewe lovers sholde, 2510
 I pleyne nat, God wot ! beforne my day."
 But al hir letter writen I ne may
 By ordre, for hit were to me a charge ;
 Hir letter was ryght longe, and therto large.
 But here and there in ryme I have hyt layde,
 There as me thoghte that she hath wel sayde.

She seyde, "The saylles cometh nat ageyn,
 Ne to the worde there nys no fey⁴ certeyn ;
 But I wote why ye come nat," quod she ;
 "For I was of my love to yow so fre. 2520
 And of the goddys that ye han forswore,
 That hire vengeaunce fal on yow therfore,
 Ye be nat suffisaunt to bere the peyne.
 To much trusted I, wel may I seyne,
 Upon youre lynage and youre faire tonge,

¹ Promise. Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 829. ² Promised. ³ Sithon was an ancient name of Thrace. Ovid says "Sithonian waves,"—waves that beat upon the shores of Thrace. ⁴ Faith

And on youre teres falsely out-wronge.
 How kouthe ye wepe soo be crafte?" quod she;
 "May there suche teres i-feynede be?
 Now certes gif ye wolde have in memorye,
 Hyt oughte be to yow but lytel glorie, 2530
 To have a sely¹ mayde thus betrayed!
 To God," quod she, "prey I, and ofte have
 prayed,

That hyt be nowe the gretest prise of alle,
 And moste honour that ever yow shal befallē.
 And when thyn olde auncetres peynted be,
 In which men may her worthynesse se,
 Then pray I God, thow peynted be also,
 That folke may reden, forth by as they go, —

*"Lo, this is he, that with his flaterye
 Betrayed hath, and doon hir vilanye, 254c
 That was his trewe love in thoghte and dede."*

"But sothely of oo poynt yet may they rede,
 That ye ben lyke youre fader, as in this;
 For he begiled Adriane, ywis,
 With suche an arte, and suche soteltee,
 As thou thy selven haste begiled me.
 As in that poynt, althogh hit be nat feire,
 Thou folwest hym certeyn, and art his eyre.
 But syn thus synfully ye me begile,
 My body mote ye seen, within a while, 255c
 Ryght in the havene of Athenes fletynge,²
 Withouten sepulture and buryinge,
 Though ye ben harder then is any stone."

¹ Innocent. ² Floating.

And whan this letter was forthe sent anone,
 And knyw how brotel¹ and how fals he was,
 She for dispeyre fordidde hir-self, alas !
 Suche sorowe hath she for he beset² hire so !
 Be war, ye wymmen, of youre sotle fo !
 Syns yet this day men may ensample se,
 And as in love trusteth no man but me. 2560

Explicit Legenda Phillis.

Incipit Legenda Ypermystre.

In Grece whilom weren brethren twoo
 Of which that oon was called Danoo,³
 That many a sone hath of hys body wonne,
 As suche false lovers ofte konne.

Among hys sones alle there was oon,
 That aldermoste he loved of everychone.
 And whan this childe was borne, this Danoo
 Shope hym a name, and called hym Lyno.

That other brother called was Egiste,⁴
 That was in love as fals as ever hym lyste. 2570
 And many a doghtre gate he in hys lyfe ;
 Of which he gate upon his ryghte wife
 A doughter dere, and did hyt for to calle
 Ypermystra, yongest of hem alle.
 The whiche childe, of hir natyvite,
 To alle goode thewes⁵ borne was she,

¹ Unsteady. ² Treated. ³ Danaus. The letter of Hypermnestra
 is Lynceus or Lynus is the fourteenth epistle in Ovid's *Heroides*
 Ægyptus. ⁵ Qualities.

As lykede to the goddes or she was borne,
That of the shefe she shulde be the corne.

The Wirdes,¹ that we clepen destanye,
Hath shapen hir, that she moste nedes be 258c
Pitouse, sad,² wise, trewe as stele.

And to this woman hyt acordeth wele ;
For though that Venus gaf hir grete beaute,
With Jubiter compounded so was she,
That conscience, trouthe, and drede of shame,
And of hir wyfehode for to kepe hir name,
This thoghte hire was felicity as here.

And rede Mars was that tyme of the yere
So feble, that his malice ys him rafte ;³
Repressed hath Venus hys cruelle crafte. 259c
And what with Venus, and other oppressyoun
Of houses, Mars hys venym ys adoun,
That Ypermystra dare not handel a knyfe
In malyce, thogh she shulde lese hir lyfe.

But natheles, as heven gan thoo turne,
To badde aspectes hath she of Saturne,⁴
That made hir to dye in prisoun.

And I shal after make mensioun
Of Danoo and Egistis also.

And thogh so be that they were brethren twoo,
For thilke tyme nas spared no lynage, 260c
Hyt lyketh hem to maken mariage
Betwix Ypermestra and hym Lyno,
And casten suche a day hyt shal be so,
And ful acorded was hit wittirly.⁵

¹ Fates. ² Sable. ³ See vol. i., Introduction; "*Astrologica Terms*," p. cvii. ⁴ Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 2453. ⁵ Certainly.

The array ys wroght, the tyme ys faste by,
 And thus Lyno hath of his fadres brother
 The doghter wedded, and eche of hem hath
 other.

The torches brennen, and the lampes bryghte,
 The sacrifices ben fu. redy dyght,¹ 2610
 Thencence out of the fire reketh sote,
 The floure, the lefe, ys rent up by the rote,
 To maken garlandes and corounes hye ;
 Ful ys the place of sounde of mynstralcye,
 Of songes amoureuse of mariage,
 As thilke tyme was the pleyne usage.
 And this was in the paleys of Egiste,
 That in his house was lorde, as hym lyst.
 And thus that day they driven to an ende ;
 The frendes taken leve, and home they wende ;
 The nyght ys comen, the bride shal go to bedde.
 Egiste to hys chambre fast hym spedde, 2622
 And prively he let his doghter calle,
 Whanne that the house voyded was of alle.
 He loked on hys doghter with glad chere,
 And to hir spak as ye shal after here.

“ My rygte doghter, tresoure of myn herte,
 Syn firste day that shapen was my sherte,²
 Or by the fatale sustren hadde my dome,
 So ny myn herte never thinge me come 2630
 As thou, Ypermystra, [my] doughter dere !
 Take hede what thy fader seythe the here,

¹ Prepared. ² Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 1566 and *Troilus and
 Cryseyde*, iii. 733.

And wirke after thy wiser ever moo.
 For alderfirste,¹ doghter, I love the soo
 That al the worlde to me nys halfe so lefe,
 Ne nolde rede² the to thy myschefe,
 For al the good under the colde moone ;
 And what I meene, hyt shal be seyde ryght
 soone,

With protestacioun, as seyn these wyse,
 That but thou do as I shal the devyse, 2640
 Thou shalt be ded, — by hym that al hath
 wrought !

At shorte wordes thou ne schapest nought
 Out of my paleyse or that thou be dede,
 But thou consente and werke aftir my rede ;
 Take this to the for ful conclusioun."

This Ypermystra caste hir eyen down,
 And quoke as dooth the lefe of aspe grene ;
 Ded wex hir hewe, and lyke as ashe to sene ;
 And seyde, " Lorde and fader, al youre wille,
 After my myght, God wote I shal fulfille, 2650
 So hit be to me no confusioun."

" I nyl," quod he, " have noon excepcioun."
 And out he kaughte a knyfe as rasour kene ;
 " Hyde this," quod he, " that hyt be not i-sene
 And whan thyn housbonde ys to bedde goo,
 While that he slepeth kut hys throte atwoo ;
 For in my dremes hyt is warned me,
 How that my nevywe shal my bane be,
 But which I not ;³ wherfore I wol be siker.⁴

¹ First of all. ² Counsel. ³ Know not. ⁴ Secure.

Gif thou say nay, we two shal make a byker,¹
As I have seyde, by him that I have sworne !"

This Ypermystre hath nygh hire wytte for-
lorne, 2662

And, for to passen harmlesse of that place,
She graunted hym ; ther was noon other grace.
And therewithal a costrel² taketh he tho
And seyde, " Hereof a draught, or two,
Gife hym to drynke whan he gooth to reste,
And he shal slepe as longe as ever the leste,
The narcotikes and opies ben so stronge.
And goo thy way, lest that hym thynke to
longe." 2670

Oute cometh the bride, and with ful sobre
chere,

As ys of maidenenes ofte the manere,
To chambre broght with revel and with songe.
And shortly, leste this tale be to longe,
This Lyno and she beth i-broght to bedde,
And every wight out at the dore hym spedde.
The nyght ys wasted and he felle aslepe ;
Ful tenderly begynneth she to wepe ;
She riste hir up, and dredefully³ she quaketh,
As dothe the braunche that Zepherus shaketh,
And hussht were alle in Argone⁴ that citee.
As colde as eny froste now wexeth shee, 2682
For pite by the herte streyneth hir soo,
And drede of dethe doth hir so moche woo.

¹ Quarrel.
Argos.

² A small vase or bottle of wood.

³ Full of dread

That thries doun she fil in swich a were,¹
 She ryst hir up and stakereth her and there,
 And on hir handes faste loketh she.
 "Allas, [and] shal myn handes blody be ?
 I am a mayde, and as by my nature,
 And be my semblant, and by my vesture, 269c
 Myn handes ben nat shapen for a knyfe,
 As for to reve no man fro hys lyfe !
 What devel have I with the knyfe to doo ?
 And shal I have my throte korve a twoo ?
 Than shal I blede, alas, and be i-shende !
 And nedes-coste ² thys thing mot have an ende
 Or he or I mot nedes lese oure lyfe.
 Now certes," quod she, "syn I am hys wyfe,
 And hathe my feythe, yet is hyt bet for me
 For to be ded in wyfely honeste, 270c
 Than be a traytour lyvyng in my shame.
 Be as be may, for erneste or for game,
 He shal awake and ryse and go hys way
 Out at this goter,³ or that hyt be day."
 And wepte ful tendirly upon his face,
 And in hir armes gan hym to embrace,
 And hym she roggeth ⁴ and awaketh softe,
 And at the wyndow lepe he fro the lofte,
 Whan she hath warned hym and doon hym
 bote.⁵

This Lyno swyfte was and lyght of fote, 271c
 And from hir ranne a ful goode pace.
 This sely womman ys so wayke,⁶ allace !

Confusion ² Of necessity. ³ Conduit. ⁴ Shaketh ⁵ Help
⁶ Weak.

Helpeles, so that er she ferre wente,
Her crewel fader did hir for to hente.¹

Allas, Lyno, why art thou so unkynde?
Why ne hast thou remembred in thy mynde,
And taken hir, and ledde hir forthe with the?
For when she saw that goon away was he,
And that she myghte not so faste go,
Ne folowen hym, she sate hir doun ryght thoo,
Til she was kaught and fetred in prisoun. 2721
This tale ys sayde for this conclusioun.

Here endeth the Legende of Goode Women.

FLE FRO THE PRES.

FLE fro the pres² and duelle with sothfast-
nesse;⁸

Suffice the thy good, though hit be smale;
For horde hath hate and clymbyng⁴ tikelnesse,⁶
Pres hath envye and wele is blent⁶ over alle,
Savour⁷ no more then the behove shalle;
Reule wel thyself that other folke canst rede,⁸
And trouthe the shal delyver, hit ys no drede.

Peyne the not eche croked to redresse
In trust of hire that turneth as a balle,⁹
Grete reste stant in lytil besynesse;
Bewar also to spurn agein an nalle,¹⁰

¹ Caused her to be taken. ² Crowd. ³ Truth. ⁴ Ambition.
Uncertainty. ⁶ Wealth is deceived ⁷ Taste. ⁸ Counsel. ⁹ That
is, Fortune. ¹⁰ An awl.

184 ORISOUNE TO THE HOLY VIRGIN.

Stryve not as doth a croke¹ with a walle
Daunte² thyselfe that daunttest otheres dede,
And trouthe the shal delyver, hit is no drede.

That the ys sent receyve in buxumnesse,
The wrasteling of this world asketh³ a fall;
Her is no home, her is but wyldyrnesse.

Forth, pilgrime! Forth, best, out of thy stalle
Loke up on hye and thonke God of alle;
Weyve thy luste and let thy goste the lede,
And trouthe the shal delyver, hit is no drede!

ORISOUNE TO THE HOLY VIRGIN.

MODER of God, and virgyne undefouled,
O blisful queene, of queenes emperice!
Preye for me, that am in synne mouled,
To God thy sone, punysshher of vice,
That of his mercy thogh that I be nyce,⁴
And negligent in keeping of his lawe,
His hye mercy my soule unto him drawe.

Moder of mercy, wey of indulgence,
That of al vertu art superlatyfe!
Saver of us by thy benevolence!
Humble lady, mayde, moder and wyfe!
Causer of pees, stynter of wo and stryfe!
My preyere unto thy sone presente,
Syn of my gilt I fully me repente.

¹ Earthen pot. ² Control. ³ Courts. ⁴ Ignorant, foolish.

Benygne confort of us wrecches all !

Be at myn endynge when that I shal deye !

O welle of pitie, unto thee I call !

Full of swetnesse, helpe me to weye

Ageyne¹ the feende, that with his handes
tweye

And [al] his might plukke wole at the balance
To weye us doune ; keepe us from his nusanse.²

And for thow art ensauple of chastite,

And of virgynes worship and honour,

Among all wommen blessid mote thow be !

Now speke and praye unto our Sauveour

That he me sende swich grace and favour,

That al the hete of brennyng leccherie

He quenche in me, — blessed maiden Marie !

O blessed lady, the cleer light of day !

Temple of oure Lorde, and seate of al good-
nesse,

That by preyere wypest cleene away

The filthes of our synful wikkidnesse !

Thyn hand forth putte, and helpe my dis-
tresse,

And fro temptacioun delivere me

Of wikkid thoght, thurgh thy benignitee.

So that the wil fulfild be of thy Sone,

And that of the Holy Goost he menlumine,

¹ Against. ² Harm.

Preye for us, as ay hath be thy wone!¹

Ladye, all swiche emprises been thyne!

Swich an advocatrice who can dyvyne

As thow right now, our greeves to redresse, —

In thy refute² is al our sikirnesse.³

Thow shapen art by Goddes ordinance

Mene⁴ for us, flour of humilitee!

Wherfore of thyne office have remembrance,

Lest that the feende, thurgh his sotiltee,

That in awayt lyth for to cacche me,

Me overcome with his treccherie!

Unto my soules helthe, thow me gye!⁵

Thow art the way of our redempcioun,

For Cryst of thee hath deynd for to take

Flessh and eek blood, for this entencioun,

Upon a crois to dien for our sake.

His precious deeth made the feendes quake,

And cristen folk for to rejoisen evere;

Helpe, from his mercy that we nat dissevere!

Tenderly remembre on the wo and peyne

That thow souffridest in his passioun

When watir and blood out of thyn eyen tweyne,

For sorwe of him, ran by thy cheekes down;

And syn thow knowest that the enchesoun⁶

Of his deeth was for to save al man kynde,

Moder of mercy, that have in thy mynde!

¹ Wont. ² Protection. ³ Security. ⁴ Mediator. ⁵ Guide
Occasion.

Wel oghten we the worshiþe and honure,
 Paleys of Cryst, Flour of virginitee !
 Syn up on thee was laid the charge and cure
 The Lord to bere of hevene and erthe and see
 And alle thynges that ther ynne be !
 Of hevenes kyng thow art predestinat
 To hele our soules of her seek ¹ estat.

Thy maidens wombe, in which our Lord lay,
 Thy tetes, whiche him gaf to sowke also,
 To our savyng be they blessed ay !
 The birthe of Cryst our thraldom putte us
 fro ;
 Joye and honour be now and evermo
 To him and thee, that unto libertee
 Fro thraldom han us quit ; blessid be yee !

By thee, Lady, y-maked is the pees
 Betwixt angels and men, it is no doute, —
 Blessid be God, that swich a modir chees ! ²
 Thy gracious bountee ³ spredeth al aboute ;
 Thogh that our hertes stierne been and stoute,
 Thow to thy Sone canst be swich a mene ⁴
 That all our giltes he forgeveth clene !

Paradys gates opened been by thee,
 And broken been the gates eek of helle !
 By thee the world restored is, *pardee* !
 Of al vertu thou art the spryng and well ;

¹ Sick. ² Chose. ³ Goodness ⁴ Mean

By thee all bountee, shortly for to tell,
In hevене and erthe by thyn ordenance
Parforned is, our soules sustenance !

Now, syn thou art of swich auctoritee, —
Lady pitouse, Virgyne wemmelees !¹
That our Lord God nat list to werne² thee
Of thy requeste, I wot wel doutelees,
Than spare nat foorth thee to putte in prees
To preye for us, Crystes modir deere,
Benygnely wole he thyn axyng heere.

*O Intemerata !*³

Apostle and freend familier of Cryst,
And his y-chosen Virgyne, Seint Jon !
Shynyng apostle and evangelyst,
And best beloved amonges hem echon !
With our Lady I preye thee to been oon,
That un to Cryst shal for us alle preye !
Do this for us, Crystes derlyng, I seye !

Marie and Jon, hevenly gemmes tweyne !
O lightes two, shynyng in the presence
Of our Lord God, now do your bysy payne
To wasshe away our cloudeful offense,
So that we mowen maken resistance
Ageyn the feend and make him to bewaill
That your prayere may so much avail.

¹ Spotless. ² Refuse. ³ *O inviolate !* This is the title of a Latin prayer, of which the remainder of the poem is a version

Ye been tho two, I knowe verrailly,
 In which the Fadir, God, gan edifie,¹
 By his Sone oonly-geten, specially
 To him a hows ;² wherfore I to yow crye,
 Beth leches³ of our synful maladie,
 Preyeth to God, Lord of misericorde,
 Our olde giltes that he nat recorde !

Be ye our help and our proteccioun,
 Syn for meryt of your virginitee
 The privilege of his deleccioun⁴
 In yow confermed God upon a tree
 Hanging ; and un to oon of you saide he,
 Right in this wyse, as I reherce can ;
 “ Beholde heer, lo, thy sone, womman ! ”

And to that othir, “ Heer thy modir, lo ! ”
 Than preye I thee that for the greet swetnesse
 Of the hy love that God betwixt yow two
 With his mowth made, and of his hie noblesse
 Enjoynd hath yow thurgh his blisfulnesse,
 As modir and sone, helpe us in our neede,
 And for our giltes make our hertes bleede !

Unto yow tweyne I my soule commende,
 Marie and John, for my sauvacioun !
 Helpith me that I may my life amende !
 Helpith now, that the habitacioun
 Of the Holy Goost, our recreatioun,

¹ Build. ² That is, the church ³ Be physicians. ⁴ Pleasure, love.

Be in myn herte, now and everemore !
 And of my soule wasshe away the sore. *Amen*

PROVERBE OF CHAUCER.

WHAT these clothes thus manyfolde,
 Lo, this hoothe somers day?
 After greet hete cometh colde ;
 No man caste his pilch¹ away.
 Of al this worlde the large compace
 It wil not in myn armes tweyne ;
 Whoso mochel wol embrace,
 Litel therof he shal distreyne.²

THE COMPLEYNT OF VENUS

THERE nys so high comfort to my plesar / re,
 Whan that I am in eny hevynesse, (300 r.)
 As for to have leyser of remembraunce
 Upon the manhod and the worthynesse,
 Upon the truth and on the stedfastnesse
 Of him whos I am al whiles I may dure.
 Ther oghte blame me no creature,
 For every wight preiseth his gentillesse.

In him ys bounte, wysdom, governaunce,
 Wel more then eny mannes witte can gesse ; 10
 For grace hath wolde so ferforthe hym avaunce,

¹ Fur cloak. ² Keep, effectively grasp. Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 6827. Fourteen spurious lines are often appended to this poem.

This poem is complementary to the *Compleynt of Mars*, and the two are usually printed as one poem. For convenience the numbers given to the lines by Tryrwhitt are noted here.

That of knyghthode he is parfite richesse ;
 Honour honoureth him for his noblesse ; (311 T.)
 Therto so well hath formed him Nature.

That I am his for ever, I him assure,
 For every wight preysith his gentillesse.

And not withstondyng al his suffisaunce
 His gentil hert ys of so grete humblesse
 To me in worde, in werke, in contenaunce,
 And me to serve is al his besynesse, 20
 That I am set in verrey sikirnesse.¹

Thus oght I blesse wel myn aventure, (320 T.)
 Sith that him list me serven and honoure,
 For every wight preiseth his gentillesse.

Now certis, Love, hit is right covenable,²
 That men ful dere bye the nobil thinge,
 As wake ³ a-bed, and fasten at the table,
 Wepinge to laugh and sing in compleynyng,
 And doun to caste visage and lokyng,
 Often to chaunge visage and countenaunce, 30
 Pley in slepyng, and dremen at the daunce,
 Al the reverse of eny glad felynge. (330 T.)

Jelosie be hanged be a cable !
 She wold al knowe throgh her espyng.
 Ther dothe no wyght nothing so resonable,
 That al nys harme in her ymagynyng.
 Thus dere abought ⁴ is Love in his gevyng,
 Which ofte he gifeth withoute ordynaunce,
 As sorow ynogh, and litil of plesaunce,
 Al the reverse of any g'lad felynge. 40

¹ Security. ² Appropriate. ³ Watch. ⁴ Suffered for

A lytel tyme his gift ys agreable,
 But ful encomberouse is the usynge ; (340 T.
 For subtil Jelosie, the deceyvable,
 Ful often tyme causeth desturbynge.
 Thus be we ever in drede and suffrynge ;
 Tⁿ no certeyn ¹ we languisshen in penaunce,
 And han ful often mony an harde myschaunce,
 Al the reverse of any glad felynge.

But certys, Love, I sey not in such wise,
 That for tescape out of youre lace ² I mente, 50
 For I so longe have be in your servise,
 That for to let you ³ wil I never assente. (350 T.)
 No fors ! ⁴ ye ! thogh Jelosye me turmente,
 Sufficeth me to se hym when I may ;
 And therfore certys to myn endyng day,
 To love hym best, that shal I never repente.

And certis, Love, whan I me wel avise ⁵
 Of eny estate that man may represente,
 Then have ye made me, thorogh your fraunchise, ⁶
 Chese ⁷ the beste that ever on erthe wente. 60
 Now love wel, hert, and loke thou never stente,
 And let the jealousye put it in assay, (360 T.)
 That for no peyn I wille not sey nay ;
 To love yow best, that shal I never repent.

Herte, to the hit oght ynogh suffice
 That Love so highe a grace to yow sente
 To chese the worthiest in alle wise,
 And most agreable unto myn entente.

¹ Certainty. ² Snare. ³ Leave you. ⁴ Matter. ⁵ Inform
⁶ Frankness. ⁷ Choose.

Seche no ferther, neythir way ne wente,¹
 Sith I have suffisaunce unto my pay,² — 7c
 Thus wol I ende this Compleynt or this Lay,
 To love hym beste ne shal I never repent.

L'Envoy.

Princes! resseyveth this Compleynt in gre,³
 Unto your excelent benignite, (372 T.)
 Directe, aftir my litel suffisaunce;
 For elde,⁴ that in my spirit dulleth me,
 Hath of endyting al the subtilte
 Welnyghe bereft out of my remembraunce;
 And eke to me hit is a grete penaunce,
 Syth ryme in Englissh hath such skarsete, 80
 To folwe worde by worde the curiosite
 Of Graunson,⁵ floure of hem that make in
 France! (380 T.)

L'ENVOY DE CHAUCER A SCOGAN.⁶

To-BROKEN been the statutes hye in hevene,
 That creat weren eternaly to dure,

¹ Lane. ² Satisfaction. ³ Favor. ⁴ Age. ⁵ One Sir Oto de Graunson was in the court of Richard II., but it is not certain that he is the "maker" or poet here extolled, to whom Chaucer owns his indebtedness for the original of the *Compleynt of Venus*. ⁶ These lines appear to be addressed to a jester referred to by Ben Jonson as

"A fine gentleman and Master of Arts
 Of Henry the Fourth's time, that made disguises
 For the king's sons and writ in ballad royal."

There is some doubt about his identity, however, and Mr. Dyce says that the "facetious" Scogan was named John, and flourished after Chaucer's death. If this be true, Shakespeare committed an anachronism by introducing a reference to him into 2 *King Henry IV.*, act iii., sc. 2, l. 32. Scogan's jests were published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Syth that I see the bryghte goddis sevene
 Mowe wepe ¹ and wayle, and passioun endure,
 As may in erthe a mortale creature :
 Allas ! fro whennes may thys thinge procede ?
 Of whiche errour I deye almost for drede.

By worde eterne whilome was yshape,
 That fro the fyfte sercle ² in no manere,
 Ne myght a drope of teeres doun eschape ; 10
 But now so wepith Venus in hir spere,³
 That with hir teeres she wol drenche ⁴ us here.
 Allas ! Scogan, this is for thyn offence !
 Thou causest this deluge of pestilence.

Havesthow not seyð in blaspheme of this
 goddis,

Thurgh pride, or thrugh thy grete rekelnesse,
 Swich thing as in the law of love forbode is,
 That for thy lady sawgh nat thy distresse,
 Therefore thou gave hir up at Mighelmesse ? ⁵
 Allas, Scogan ! of olde folke ne yonge, 20
 Was never erst Scogan blamed for his tonge.

Thow drowe in skorne Cupide eke to recorde
 Of thilke rebel worde that thou hast spoken,
 For which he wol no lenger be thy lorde ;
 And, Scogan, though his bowe be nat broken,
 He wol nat with his arwes been ywroken ⁶
 On the ne me, ne noon of youre figure ;
 We shul of him have neyther hurte nor cure.

¹ The reference appears to be to the great rains and pestilences of the latter part of the fourteenth century. ² See vol. i., Introduction, for astrological allusions. ³ Sphere. ⁴ Drown. ⁵ Michaelmas (September 29th). ⁶ Revenged.

Now certes, frend, I drede of thyn unhappe,
 Leste for thy gilte the wreche¹ of love procede
 On alle hem that ben hoor and rounde of
 shappe;² 31

That ben so lykly folke in love to spede,
 Than shal we for oure laboure have noo mede ;
 But wel I wot thow wolt answeere and saye,
 ‘ Loo, tholde Grisel³ lyste to ryme and playe ! ’

Nay, Scogan, say not soo, for I mexcuse,
 God helpe me so, in no ryme dowteles ;
 Ne thynke I never of slepe to wake my muse,
 That rusteth in my shethe stille in pees ;
 While I was yonge I put her forth in prees ; 40
 But alle shal passe that men prose or ryme,
 Take every man hys turne as for his tyme.

Scogan, that knelest at the streemes hede⁴
 Of grace, of alle honour, and of worthynesse !
 In thende of which streme⁵ I am dul as dede,
 Forgete in solytarie wilderness ;
 Yet, Scogan, thenke on Tullius⁶ kyndenesse ;
 Mynde thy frend there it may fructyfye,
 Farewel, and loke thow never eft⁷ love dyffye.

L'ENVOY DE CHAUCER A BUKTON.⁸

My maister, Buktoun, whan of Crist our kyng
 Was axed, What ys trouthe or sothefastnesse ?

¹ Vengeance. ² An allusion to Chaucer's age and form. ³ The old gray one. ⁴ That is, at Windsor. ⁵ That is, Greenwich. ⁶ That is, Marcus Tullius Cicero's *De Amicitia* (of friendship). ⁷ Again. ⁸ One Peter de Bukton is mentioned by Tyrwhitt, but the identity of Chaucer's friend is still uncertain.

He nat a worde answerde to that axinge,
 As who saith, "Noo man is al trew," I
 gesse ;

And therfore, though I highte ¹ to expresse
 The sorwe and woo that is in mariage,
 I dar not writen of hit no wikkednesse,
 Leste I my-self falle eft ² in swich dotage.

I wol nat seyn how that hyt is the cheyne
 Of Sathanas, on which he gnaweth evere ; 10
 But I dar seyn, were he oute of his peyne,
 As by his wille he wolde be bounde nevere.
 But thilke doted foole that ofte hath levere
 Ycheyned be than out of prison crepe,
 God lete him never fro his woo dissevere,
 Ne no man him bewayle though he wepe !

But yet lest thou do worse, take a wyfe ;
 Bet ys to wedde than brenne in worse wise,
 But thou shalt have sorwe on thy flessch, thy
 lyfe,

And ben thy wyfes thral, as seyn these wise. 20
 And yf that hooly writte may nat suffyse,
 Experience shal the teche, so may happe,
 That the were lever to be take in Frise,
 Than eft falle of weddyng in the trappe.

This lytel written proverbes or figure
 I sende yow, take kepe of hyt, I rede : ³
 Unwise is he that kan noo wele endure.
 If thou be siker, ⁴ put the nat in drede.
 The Wyfe of Bathe I pray yow that ye rede

¹ Promised. ² Afterward. ³ Advise. ⁴ Secure.

Of this matere that we have on honde. 30
 God graunte yow your lyfe frely to lede
 In fredom, for ful harde is to be bonde.

GENTILNESSE.

'THE firste fadir and fynder of gentilnesse,¹
 What man desireth gentle for to be
 Moste folowe his trace and alle his wittes
 dresse²
 Vertu to shew and vicis for to flee ;
 For unto vertu longeth³ dignitee,
 And nought the revers, savely dare I deme,
 Al were he⁴ mitre, corone, or diademe.

The firste stoke⁵ was ful of rightwisnesse,
 Trewe of his word, soboure, pitous and free,
 Cleene of his gooste and lovid besynesse,
 Ageynste the vice of slowthe in honeste ;
 And but his heire love vertu as did he,
 He nis not gentille though him riche seme,
 Al were he mitre, corone, or diademe.

Vice may wel bee heyre to olde richesse,
 But there may no man, as ye may welle see,
 Byquethe his sone his vertuous noblesse ;

¹ That is, Christ. Compare Dekker's expression, "the first true gentleman that ever breathed." The same idea was suggested by Juliana Berners, *circ.* 1485. ² Address ³ Belongeth. ⁴ Although he wear ⁵ Race. Cf. *Ælas Prima*.

That is appropierid into noo degree,
 But the firste Fadir in Magestee,
 Which may his heires deeme hem that him
 queme,¹
 Al were he mytre, corone, or diademe.

BALLADE SENT TO KING RICHARD.

SOMETIME the worlde was so stedfast and
 stable,
 That mannes worde was holde obligacioun ;
 And now hyt is so fals and disceyvable,
 That worde and dede, as in conclusioun,
 Been noothiing oon ; for turned up-so-down
 Is alle this worlde, thurgh mede ² and wilful-
 nesse,
 That alle is loste for lakke of stedfastnesse.
 What maketh this worlde to be so variable
 But luste that folke han in dissensioun ?
 For nowe adayes a man is holde unhable,³ 10
 But yf he kan, by somme collusioun,
 Do his neghbour wronge or oppressioun.
 What causeth this but wilfulle wrecchednesse,
 That alle ys loste for lakke of stedfastnesse ?
 Trouthe is put down, resoun is holden fable
 Vertu hathe now noo dominacioun ;
 Pitee exiled, noo man ys merciablen ;
 Thurgh covytyse is blente ⁴ discrecioun ;

¹ Please. ² Bribery. ³ Unskillful (Fr. *inhabile*). ⁴ Put aside

The worlde hath made permutacioun
 Fro ryght to wrong, fro trouthe to fikelenesse,
 That alle ys lost for lakke of stedfastnesse. 21

Lenvoye.

O Prince, desire to be honourable ;
 Cherysshe thy folke, and hate extorcioun ;
 Suffre nothing, that may be reprovabie
 To thyn estaate, doon ¹ in thy region ;
 Shew forth the swerde of castigacioun ;
 Drede God, do law, love trouthe and worthi-
 nesse,
 And wedde thy folke ageyne to stedfastnesse.

BALADE DE VISAGE SANZ PEINTURE.

THIS wrecched worlde is transmutacioun,
 As wele or wo, now poverte, now honour, —
 Withowten ordyr or wis descresyoun,
 Governed is by Fortunes erreure ;
 But natheles the lakke of hyr favoure
 Ne may nat don me syngen, ³ thogh I deye,
J'ay tout perdu, mon temps et mon labour, ⁴
 For fynaly, Fortune, I the deffye.

Yit is me left the lyght of my resoun,
 To knowen frend fro foo in thi merour, 10

¹ To be done. ² This appears to be a translation, but the connection with the text is not apparent. ³ Cause me to sing. ⁴ Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 18,492. I have lost all, my time and my labor.

So mochel hath yit thy whirlynge up and down
 Ytaught me for to knowe in an hour ;
 But trewely no fors of thi reddour¹
 To hym that over hymself hath the maystrye,
 My suffysaunce shal be my socour,
 For fynaly, Fortune, I thee deffye.

O Socrates, thou stidfast chaumpyoun,
 She never myhte be thi tormentour,
 Thow never dreddest hyr oppressyoun,
 Ne in hyr chere² founde thow no savoure ; 20
 Thow knewe wel the deseyte of hyr coloure,
 And that hir moste worshipec is to lye ;
 I knew hir ek a fals dissimuloure,
 For fynaly, Fortune, I the deffye.

Le Responce de Fortune a Pleintif.

No man ys wrechchyd but hymself yt wene,³
 And he that hath hymself hath suffisaunce.
 Whi seysthow thanne I am to the so kene,
 That hast thyself out of my governaunce ?
 Sey thus : “ *Graunt mercy*⁴ of thyn habound-
 aunce
 That thow hast lent or this ;” why wolt thou
 stryve. 30

What woost thow yit how I the wol avaunce ?
 And ek thow hast thy beste frende alyve.

I have the taught devisyoun bytwene
 Frend of effect⁵ and frende of countenaunce.

¹ No matter for thy roughness (Fr. *roideur*). ² Countenance
 Think. ⁴ Many thanks. ⁵ Reality.

The nedeth nat the galle of no hyene,
 That cureth eyen derkyd for penaunce ;
 Now sest thou cleer that weere in ignoraunce.
 Yit halt thin ancre, and yit thou mayst aryve
 Ther bounte ¹ berth the keye of my substaunce,
 And ek thou hast thy beste frende alyve. 40

How manye have I refused to sustene,
 Syn I the fostred have in thy plesaunce !
 Wolthow thanne make a statute on thy quene,
 That I shal ben ay at thy ordynaunce ?
 Thow born art in my regne of varyaunce,²
 Aboute the wheel with oother most thou dryve ;
 My loore ³ is bet, than wikke is thi grevaunce,
 And ek thou hast thy beste frende alyve.

Le Responce du Pleintif contre Fortune.

Thy loore I dempne ! it is adversyte !
 My frend maysthow nat reven,⁴ blynde god-
 desse ! 50
 That I thy frendes ⁵ knowe, I thanke to the ;
 Tak hem agayn ! lat hem go lye on presse !
 The negardye in kepynge hyr rychesse
 Pronostik ⁶ is thow wolt hire toure asayle ;
 Wikke appetyt comth ay before sykenesse, —
 In general this rewle may nat fayle.

Le Responce de Fortune contre le Pleintif.

Thow pynchest at my mutabylyte,
 For I the lente a drope of my rychesse ;

¹ Goodness. ² Changeable kingdom. ³ Lesson. ⁴ Take away
 That is, friends who are such during good fortune only. ⁵ Prog-
 nostic.

And now me lykyth to withdrawe me,
 Whi sholdysthow my realte ¹ opresse? 60
 The see may ebbe and flowen moore or lesse ;
 The welkne hath myht to shyne, reyne, or
 hayle ;
 Ryht so mot I kythen my brutelnesse, ² —
 In general this rewle may nat fayle.

Le Pleintif.

Lo, excussyoun of the Majeste
 That al purveyeth of his ryghtwysnesse,
 That same thinge Fortune clepyn ye,
 Ye blynde beestys, ful of lewednesse !
 The hevene hath proprete of sykynesne ;
 This world hath ever resteles travayle ; 70
 Thy laste day ³ is ende of myn interesse, ⁴ —
 In general this rewele may nat fayle.

Lenvoy de Fortune.

Prynses ! I prey yow of yowre gentillesse,
 Lat nat this man on me thus crye and pleyne,
 And I shal quyte yow youre bysynesse,
 At my requeste as thre of yow or tweyne ;
 That but yow lest releve hym of hys payne,
 Preyeth hys beste frend ⁵ of his noblesse,
 That to som betere estat he may attayne.

¹ Royalty. ² Show my fickleness. ³ Doomsday. ⁴ That is, in
 affairs of this world. ⁵ An unknown friend, to whom this delicate
 petition for assistance was addressed.

THE COMPLEYNTE OF CHAUCER TO
HIS PURSE.

To you, my purse, and to noon other wight
Compleyn I, for ye be my lady dere !
I am so sory now that ye been lyght,
For, certes, but-yf ye make me hevy chere,
Me were as leef be layde upon my bere,
For whiche unto your mercy thus I crye, —
Beeth hevy ageyne, or elles mote I dye !

Now voucheth sauf this day, or it be nyghte,
That I of you the blissful sounne may here,
Or see your colour lyke the sonne bryghte,
That of yelownesse hadde never pere.
Ye be my lyfe ! ye be myn hertys stere !¹
Quene of comfort and goode companye !
Beth hevy ageyne, or elles mote I dye.

Now, purse, that ben to me my lyves lyght
And saveour, as doun in this worlde here,
Oute of this tounne helpe me thurgh your myght.
Syn that ye wole not bene my tresorere ;
For I am shave as nye as is a frere.
But I praye unto your curtesye,
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles moote I dye !

¹ Guide.

L'Envoye de Chaucer.

O conquerour of Brutes Albyoun,¹
Whiche that by lygne and free eleccioun
 Been verray kyng,² this song to you I sende,
 And ye that mowen ³ alle myn harme amende,
Have mynde upon my supplicacioun !

¹ The Albion of Brutus, a descendant of Æneas. ² King Henry IV. seems to be meant. ³ May.

POEMS

ATTRIBUTED TO CHAUCER.

THE ROMAUNT OF THE ROSE.

MANY men sayen that in swevenynges,
Ther nys but fables and lesynges ;
But men may some swevene sene,
Whiche hardely that false ne bene,
But afterwarde ben apparaunt.
This maye I drawe to warraunt,
An authour that highte Macrobes,¹
That halte nat dremes false ne lees,²
But undoth³ us the avysyoun
That whylom mette⁴ kyng Cipioun. 10

And who-so sayth or weneth⁵ it be
A jape, or elles nycetie⁶
To wene that dremes after falle,
Lette who-so lyst a foole me calle.
For this trowe I, and saye for me,
That dremes signifiounce be
Of good and harme to many wightes,
That dremen in her sleep a-nyghtes
Ful many thynges covertly,
That fallen after al openly.⁷ 20

Within my twenty yere of age,
Whan that love taketh his corage
Of yonge folk, I wente soon

¹ Macrobius. Cf. *Parlement of Foules*, l. 31. ² Lies. ³ Unfoldeth. ⁴ Dreamed. ⁵ Thinketh. ⁶ A joke or else an ignorance
⁷ Cf. *House of Fame*, ll. 1-65, and *Canterbury Tales*, l. 8591.

To bed, as I was wont to doon,
 And fast I slept ; and in slepyng,
 Me mette suche a swevenyng,
 That lykede¹ me wonderous wele ;
 But in that sweven is never a dele
 That it nys afterwarde befallē,
 Ryght as this dreame wol tel us alle. 30

Now this dreame wol I ryme aryghte,
 To make your hertes gaye and lyghte ;
 For Love it prayeth, and also
 Commaundeth me that it be so.

And yf there any aske me,
 Whether that it be he or she,
 How this boke which is here
 Shal hatte,² that I rede you here,
 It is the "Romaunce of the Rose,"
 In which alle the art of love I close.³ 40

The mater fayre is of to make ;
 God graunt me in gre⁴ that she it take
 For whom that it begonnen is !
 And that is she that hath, ywys,
 So mochel pris ; and therto she
 So worthy is biloved to be,
 That she wel ought of pris and ryght
 Be cleped "Rose" of every wight.

That it was May me thoughte tho,
 It is fyve yere or more ago ; 50
 That it was May, thus dremede me,
 In tyme of love and jolite,

¹ Pleased. ² Be called. ³ Include. ⁴ Favor

That al thing gynneth waxen gay,
 For there is neither busk nor hay¹
 In May, that it nyl shrouded bene,
 And it with newe leves wrene.²
 These wodes eek recoveren grene,
 That drie in wynter ben to sene ;
 And the erth wexith proude withalle,
 For swote³ dewes that on it falle ; 60
 And the pore estat forgette,
 In which that wynter had it sette.
 And than bycometh the ground so proude,
 That it wole have a newe shroude,
 And makith so queynt his robe and faire,
 That it had hewes an hundred payre,
 Of gras and flouris, ynde and pers,⁴
 And many hewes ful dyvers :
 That is the robe I mene, iwis,⁵
 Through which the ground to preisen⁶ is. 70
 The briddes, that haven lefte her song,
 While thei han suffride cold so strong
 In wedres gryl⁷ and derk to sighte,
 Ben in May for the sonne brighte,
 So glade, that they shewe in syngyng,
 That in her hertis is sich lykyng,
 That they mote syngen and be light.
 Than doth the nyghtyngale hir myght,
 To make noyse, and syngen blythe.
 'Than is blisful many sithe⁸ 80

¹ Bush nor hedge. ² Cover. ³ Sweet. ⁴ Azure and sky-colored Truly. ⁶ To be praised. ⁷ Severe. ⁸ Times.

The chelaundre and the papyngay.¹
 Than younge folk entenden² ay
 For to ben gay and amorous,
 The tyme is than so faverous.³

Hard is the hert that loveth nought
 In May, whan al this mirth is wrought ;
 Whan he may on these braunches here
 The smale briddes syngen clere
 Her blesful, swete song pitous,
 And in this sesoun delytous,
 Whan love affraieth⁴ alle thing.

90

Me thought a nyght, in my slepyng,
 Right in my bed ful redily,
 That it was by the morowe erly ;
 And up I roos, and gan me clothe ;
 Anoon I wisshe⁵ myn hondis bothe ;
 A sylvre nedle forth I droughe,
 Out of an aguler⁶ queynt ynoughe,
 And gan this nedle threde anon,
 For out of toun me list to gon,
 The song of briddes for to here
 That in thise buskes syngen clere,
 And in the swete seson that leve⁷ is ;
 With a threde bastyng my slevis,
 Alone I wente in my plaiyng,
 The smale foules song harknyng,
 They peyned hem ful many peyre,
 To synge on bowes blosmed feyre.

100

¹ The finch and the parrot. ² Attend. ³ Propitious. ⁴ Moveth
 Washed. ⁵ Needle-case. ⁷ Lovely.

Joly and gay, ful of gladnesse,
 Toward a ryver gan I me dresse, 111
 That I herd renne faste by ;
 For fairer playyng non saugh I
 'Than playen me by that ryvere,
 For from an hille that stood ther nere,
 Cam down the streme ful stif and bold.
 Cleer was the water, and as cold
 As any welle¹ is, sooth to seyn,
 And somdele lasse it was than Seyn,²
 But it was strayghter, wel-away !
 And never saugh I, er that day, 120
 The water that so wel lykede³ me ;
 And wondir glad was I to se
 That lusty place, and that ryvere ;
 And with that watir that ran so clere
 My face I wysshe. Tho saugh I welle
 The botme paved everydelle
 With gravel, full of stones shene.
 The medewe softe, swote and grene,
 Beet right up on the watir syde.
 Ful clere was than the morow tyde, 130
 And ful attempre, out of drede.
 Tho gan I walke thorough the mede.
 Dounward ay in my pleiyng,
 The ryver syde costeiying.⁴

And whan I had a while goon,
 I saugh a gardyn right anoon,

¹ Spring. ² Seine. ³ Pleased. ⁴ Walking by the bank (Lat *costa*, a side ; compare "coast").

Ful long and brood ; and everydelle
 Enclosed was, and walled welle,
 With highe walles enbatailled,
 Portraied without, and wel entailed,¹ 140
 With many riche portraitures ;
 And bothe the ymages and the peyntures
 Gan I biholde bysyly.

And I wole telle you redyly
 Of thilk ymages the semblaunce,
 As fer as I have in remembraunce.

Amyd saugh I a HATE stonde,
 That for hir wrathe, yre, and onde,²
 Semede to ben an moveresse,
 An angry wight, a chideresse. 150

And ful of gyle, and felle corage,
 By semblaunt was that ilke ymage.
 And she was no thyng wel arraied ;
 But lyk a wode ³ womman afraied,
 Frounced ⁴ foule was hir visage,
 And grennyng for dispitous rage,
 Hir nose snorted up for tene.⁵
 Ful hidous was she for to sene,
 Ful foule and rusty was she this.
 Hir heed ywrithen ⁶ was, y-wis, 160
 Ful grymly with a greet towayle.

An ymage of another entayle,⁷
 A lyft half,⁸ was hir by ;
 Hir name above hir heed saugh I,
 And she was called FELONY.

Carved (Fr. *tailler*, to cut). ² Malice (O. E. *anda*, *onda*).
³ Mad. ⁴ Wrinkled (Fr. *froncer*, to wrinkle, frown). ⁵ Anger
⁶ Wreathed ⁷ Carving (Fr. *entaille*). ⁸ On the left side.

Another ymage, that VILANY
 Clepid was, saugh I and fonde
 Upon the wal on hir right honde.
 Vilany was lyk somdelle
 That other ymage ; and, trustith wel, 170
 She semede a wikked creature.
 By countenaunce in portrayture,
 She semede be ful dispitous,
 And eek ful proude and outragious.
 Wel coude he peynte, I undirtake,
 That sich ymage coude make.
 Ful foule and cherlysshe semede she,
 And eek vylayneus for to be,
 And litel coude ¹ of norture,
 To worshipec any creature. 180

And next was peynted COVEITISE,
 That eggith folk in many gise,
 To take, and geve right nought ageyne,
 And gret tresouris up to leyne.²
 And that is that ³ for usure
 Leneth ⁴ to many a creature,
 The lasse for the more wynnynge,
 So coveitise is her brennyng.
 And that is that penyes fele,⁵
 That techith for to robbe and stele 190
 These theves, and these smale harlotes ; ⁶
 And that is routh, for by her ⁷ throtes,
 Ful many oon hangith at the laste.

¹ Knew. ² Lay. ³ She that. ⁴ Lendeth. ⁵ Many pennies
⁶ That is, both male and female ribalds. ⁷ Their.

She makith folk compasse and caste
 To taken other folkis thyng,
 Thorough robberie, or myscoveiting.
 And that is she that makith trechoures ;¹
 And she makith false pleadoures,
 That with hir termes and hir domes
 Doon maydens, children, and eek gomes,² 200
 Her heritage to forgo.
 Ful croked were hir hondis two,
 For coveitise is evere wode³
 To gripen other folkis gode.
 Coveityse, for hir wynnyng,
 Ful leef hath other mennes thing.

Another ymage set saugh I
 Next Coveitise faste by,
 And she was clepid AVARICE.
 Ful foule in peyntyng was that vice ; 210
 Ful sade and caytif⁴ was she eek,
 And also grene as ony leek.
 So yvel-hewed was hir colour,
 Hir semede to have lyved in langour.
 She was lyk thyng for hungre deed,
 That ladde hir lyf oonly by breed
 Kneden with eisel⁵ strong and egre.
 And therto she was lene and megre,
 And she was clad ful porely,
 Al in an old torn courtepy,⁶ 220
 As she were al with doggis torne ;

¹ Cheats. ² Men (O. E. *guma*, man). ³ Mad. ⁴ Sober and wretched. ⁵ Vinegar. Cf. *Hamlet*, act. v., sc. 1, l. 299, as some read Cloak.

And bothe bihynde and eke biforne
Clouted was she beggarly.

A mantyl henge hir faste by,
Upon a perche, weike and smalle,
A burnet¹ cote henge therwith alle,
Furred with no menyvere,²
But with a furre rough of here,
Of lambe skynnes hevy and blake ;
It was ful old, I undirtake, 230
For Avarice to clothe hir welle
Ne hastith hir never a delle ;
For certeynly it were hir loth
To weren ofte that ilk cloth ;
And if it were forwered,³ she
Wolde have ful gret necessite
Of clothyng, er she bought hir newe,
Al were it bad of wolle and hewe.
This Avarice hilde in hir hande
A purs, that henge by a bande ; 240
And that she hidde and bonde so strong,
Men must abyde wondir long,
Out of that purs er ther come ought,
For that ne cometh not in hir thought ;
It was not certein hir entente,
That fro that purs a peny wente.

And by that ymage nygh ynough
Was peynted ENVYE, that never lough,
Nor never wel in hir herte farede
But if she outhur saugh or herede 250

¹ Brown. ² Ermine and weasel fur. ³ Worn out.

Som gret myschaunce, or gret disese.¹
 No thyng may so moch hir plese
 As myschef and mysaventure ;
 Or whan she seeth discomfiture
 Upon ony worthy man falle,
 Than likith ² hir wel with-alle.
 She is ful glade in hir corage,
 If she se any grete lynage
 Be brought to nought in shynful ³ wise.
 And if a man in honour rise 260
 Or by his witte or by his prowesse,
 Of that hath she gret hevynesse,
 For, trustith wel, she goth nygh wode,
 Whan any chaunge happith gode.
 Envie is of such crueltee,
 That feith ne trouthe holdith she
 To freend ne felawe, bad or good.
 Ne she hath kynne noon of hir blood,
 That she nys ful her enemye.
 She nolde, I dar seyn hardelye, 270
 Hir owne fadir farede welle.

And sore abieth ⁴ she everydelle
 Hir malice, and hir male-talent : ⁵
 For she is in so gret turment
 And hath such, whan folk doth good,
 That nygh she meltith for pure wood.⁶
 Hir herte kerveth and so brekith
 'That God the puple wel a-wrekith.'⁷

¹ Discomfort. ² Pleaseth. ³ Shameful. ⁴ Suffereth for. ⁵ Evil
 inclination. ⁶ Madness ⁷ Avengeth.

Envie, i-wis, shal nevere lette¹
 Som blame upon the folk to sette. 280
 I trowe that if Envie, i-wis,
 Knewe the beste man that is,
 On this side or biyonde the see,
 Yit somewhat lakken² hym wolde she.
 And if he were so hende³ and wis,
 That she ne myght al abate his pris,
 Yit wolde she blame his worthynesse,
 Or by hir wordis make it lesse.
 I saugh Envie in that peyntyng
 Hadde a wondirful lokyng ; 290
 For she ne lokide but a-wrie,
 Or overthart, alle baggyngly.⁴
 And she hadde a foul usage ;
 She myghte loke in no visage
 Of man or womman forth right pleyn,
 But shette hir eien for disdeyn ;
 So for envie brenned she
 Whan she myghte any man yse
 That fairer or worthier were, or wise,
 Or elles stode in folkis pryse. 300

SOROWE was peynted next Envie
 Upon that walle of masonrye.
 But wel was seyn in hir colour
 That she hadde lyved in langour ;
 Hir semede to have the jaunyce.
 Nought half so pale was Avarice,
 Nor no thyng lyk of lenesse ;

¹ Stint. ² Dispraise. ³ Courteous. ⁴ Disdainfully

For sorowe, thought, and gret distresse,
 That she hadde suffred day and nyght,
 Made hir ful yolare,¹ and no thyng bright, 310
 Ful fade,² pale and megre also.
 Was never wight yit half so wo
 As that hir semede for to be,
 Nor so fulfilled of ire as she.
 I trowe that no wight myght hir please
 Nor do that thyng that myght hir ease,
 Nor she ne wolde hir sorowe slake,
 Nor comfort noon unto hir take.
 So depe was hir wo bigonnen,
 And eek hir hert in angre ronnen, 320
 A sorowful thyng wel semede she.

Nor she hadde no thyng slowe be
 For to forcracchen³ al hir face,
 And for to rent in many place
 Hir clothis, and for to tere hir swire,⁴
 As she that was fulfilled of ire ;
 And al to-torn lay eek hir here
 Aboute hir shuldris, here and there,
 As she that hadde it al to-rent
 For angre and for maltalent.⁵ 330
 And eek I telle you certeynly
 Hough that she wepe ful tendirly.⁶
 In worlde nys wyght so harde of herte
 That hadde sene hir sorowes smerte,

¹ Yellow. ² Dull (F- *fade*, insipid ; Lat. *vapidus*). ³ Scratch.
 Neck. ⁴ Evil inclination. ⁵ Lines 333-380 are supplied from the
 edition of Thomas Speght (1598), a leaf having been torn from the
 unique MS. in the Hunterian Museum at Glasgow, the basis of the
 most of the remainder of the text

That nolde have had of her pytye,
 So wo-begonne a thyng was she.
 She al to-dasht her-selfe for woo,
 And smote togyder her hondes two.
 To sorowe was she ful ententyfe,
 That woful rechelesse caytyfe ;
 Her roughthe lytel of playing,
 Or of clypppynge¹ or kyssynge ;
 For who-so sorowful is in herte
 Hym luste not to playe ne sterte,
 Ne for to dauncen, ne to synge,
 Ne may his herte in tempre brynge
 To make joye on even or morowe,
 For joye is contrarie unto sorowe.

340

ELDE was paynted after this,
 That shorter was a fote, iwys,
 Than she was wont in her yonghede.²
 Unneth³ her-selfe she myghte fede ;
 So feble and eke so olde was she
 That faded was al her beaute.
 Ful salowe was waxen her coloure,
 Her heed for hore⁴ was whyte as floure.
 Iwys, great qualme ne were it none,
 Ne synne, although her lyfe were gone.
 Al woxen was her body unwelde⁵
 And drye and dwyned⁶ al for elde.
 A foule forwelked⁷ thyng was she
 That whylom rounde and soft hadde be.

350

360

¹ Embracing. ² Youth. ³ Scarcely. ⁴ Whitewash. ⁵ Difficult
 of movement. ⁶ Dwindled. ⁷ Much wrinkled.

Her eeres shoken fast withalle,
 As from her heed they wolde falle.
 Her face frounced ¹ and forpyned,²
 And both her hondes lorne, for-dwined.³
 So olde she was that she ne wente
 A fote, but it were by potente.⁴

The tyme, that passeth nyght and daye,
 And restelesse travayleth aye, 372
 And steleth from us so prively,
 That to us semeth sykerly
 That it in one poynt dwelleth ever,
 And certes it ne resteth never,
 But goth so fast, and passeth aye,
 That there nys man that thynke may
 What tyme that nowe present is, —
 Asketh at these clerkes this,
 For men thynke it redily
 Thre tymes ben ypassed by, — 380
 The tyme, that may not sojourne,
 But goth, and may never retourne,
 As watir that doun renneth ay,
 But never drope retourne may;
 'Ther may no thing as tyme endure,
 Metalle, nor erthely creature,
 For alle thing it frette and shalle:
 The tyme eke, that chaungith alle,
 And alle doth waxe,⁵ and fostred be,
 And alle thing distroieth he: 390

¹ Wrinkled. ² Wasted. ³ Much wasted. ⁴ Staff. Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 11,818. ⁵ Doth cause to grow

The tyme, that eldith our auncessours
 And eldith kynges and emperours,
 And that us alle shai overcomen
 Er that deth us shal have nomen :
 The tyme, that hath al in welde
 To elden folk,¹ had maad hir Elde
 So ynly, that to my witing
 She myghte helpe hir-silf no thing,
 But turned ageyn unto childhede ;
 She hadde no thing hir-silf to lede, 400
 Ne witte ne pithe in hir holde
 More than a child of two yeer olde.
 But natheles I trowe that she
 Was faire sumtyme, and fresh to se,
 Whan she was in hir rightful age :
 But she was past al that passage
 And was a doted thing bicomen.
 And furred cope on hadde she nomen ;²
 Wel hadde she clad hir-silf and warme,
 For colde myght elles don hir harme. 410
 These olde folk have alwey colde,
 Her kynde³ is sich, whan they ben olde.

Another thing was don there write,⁴
 That semede lyk an ipocrite,
 And it was clepid POPE-HOLY.⁵
 That ilk is she that pryvely
 Ne spareth never a wikked dede,
 Whan men of hir taken noon hede,

¹ Hath in its power to age folk Taken. ³ Their nature.
⁴ Caused there to be written. ⁵ Hypocrisy.

And maketh hir outward precious,¹
 With pale visage and pitous, 420
 And semeth a semely creature ;
 But ther nys no mysaventure,
 That she ne thenkith in hir corage.
 Ful lyk to hir was that ymage,
 That makith was lyk hir semblaunce.
 She was ful symple of countenaunce,
 And she was clothed and eke shod,
 As she were for the love of God
 Yolden² to relygioun,
 Sich semede hir devocioun. 430

A sauter helde she fast in honde,
 And bisily she gan to fonde³
 To make many a feynt praiere,
 To God, and to his seyntis dere.
 Ne she was gay, ne fresh, ne jolyf,
 But semede to be ful ententyf
 To gode werkis, and to faire ;
 And therto she had on an haire.⁴

Ne certis she was fatt no thing
 But semede wery for fasting, 440
 Of colour pale and deed was she.
 From hir the gate ay werned⁵ be
 Of Paradys, that blisful place ;
 For sich folk maketh lene her grace,
 As Crist seith in his Evangile,
 To gete prys in toun a while ;

¹ Over nice. ² Yielded. ³ To try. ⁴ A hair shirt. ⁵ Forbidden

And for a litel glorie veigne,
They lesen God and al his reigne.¹

And alderlast of everychon
Was peynted POVERT al aloon, 450
That not a peny hadde in holde,
Alle-though she hir clothis solde,
And though she shulde añ-honged be,
For nakid as a worme was she.
And if the wedir stormy were,
For colde she shulde have deyde there.

She nadde on but a streit ² olde sak,
And many a cloute on it ther stak ;
This was hir cote, and hir mantelle,
No more was there never a delle 460
To clothe hir with ; I undirtake,
Grete leyser hadde she to quake.
And she was putt, that I of talke,
Fer fro these other, up in an halke ;³
There lurked and there courede ⁴ she,
For pover thing, where so it be,
Is shamefast, and dispised ay.
Acursed may wel be that day,
That povere man conceyved is ;
For, God wote, al to selde, iwys, 470
Is ony povere man wel fedde,
Or wel araied or y-cledde,
Or wel-biloved, in sich wise,
In honour that he may arise.

Alle these thingis welle avised,

¹ Kingdom. Scanty. ³ Corner. ⁴ Crouched

As I have you er this devysed,
 With gold and asure over alle,
 Depeynted newe upon the walle.¹
 Square was the walle, and high sumdelle ;
 Enclosed and y-barred welle, 480
 In stede of hegge, was that gardyne ;
 Come nevere shepherde therynne.

Into that gardyn, wel y-wrought,
 Who-so that me coude have brought,
 By laddris or elles by degre,²
 It wolde wel have liked ³ me,
 For sich solace, sich joie, and play,
 I trowe that nevere man ne say,⁴
 As was in that place delytous.

The gardeyn was not daungerous ⁵ 490
 To herberwe ⁶ briddes many oon.
 So riche a yeer was never noon
 Of briddes songe, and braunches grene.
 Therynne were briddes mo, I wene,
 Than ben in alle the rewme ⁷ of Fraunce.
 Ful blisful was the accordaunce
 Of swete and pitous songe thei made,
 For alle this world it owghte glade.

And I my-silf so mery ferde,⁸
 Whan I her blisful songes herde, 500
 That for an hundreth pounce wolde I,
 If that the passage opunly
 Hadde be unto me fre,

¹ That is, on the outside of the wall, as representing things antagonistic to Love. ² Stairs. ³ Pleased. ⁴ Saw. ⁵ Sparing. ⁶ Har-
 bor. ⁷ Realm. ⁸ Fared.

That I nolde entren for to se
Thassemble — God kepe it fro care ! —
Of briddis, whiche therynne ware,
That songen thorgh her mery throtes,
Daunws ¹ of love, and mery notes.

Whan I thus herde foules synge,
I felle fast in a weymentyng,² 510
By which art, or by what engyne,³
I myghte come into that gardyne ;
But way I couthe fynde noon,
Into that gardyne for to goon.
Ne nought wist I if that ther were
Eyther hole or place where,
By which I myghte have entre,
Ne ther was noon to teche me,
For I was al aloone i-wys,
For wo and angwishis of this. 520

Til atte last bithought I me,
That by no weye ne myght it be,
That ther nas laddre or wey to passe,
Or hole, into so faire a place.
Tho gan I go a fulle grete pas,⁴
Envyronyng evene in compas
The closing of the square walle,
Tyl that I fonde a wiket smalle
So shett, that I ne myght in gon,
And other entre was ther noon. 530

Uppon this dore I gan to smyte

¹ Dances. ² Lamenting. Contrivance. ⁴ That is, to go rapidly.

That was so fetys,¹ and so lite,²
 For other weye coude I not seke.
 Ful long I shof, and knokkide eke,
 And stood ful long and of herknyng
 If that I herde ony wight comyng ;
 Til thilke dore of that entre
 A mayden curteys openyde me.

Hir heer was as yelow of hewe
 As ony basyn scoured newe. 540
 Hir flesh tendre as is a chike,
 With bent browis, smothe and slyke ;
 And by mesure large were
 The openyng of hir yen clere.
 Hir nose of good proporcioun,
 Hir yen grey, as is a faucoun,
 With swete breth and wel savoured.
 Hir face white and wel coloured,
 With litel mouth, and rounde to see ;
 A clove³ chynne eke hadde she. 550
 Hir nekke was of good fasoun⁴
 In lengthe and gretnesse by resoun,⁵
 Withoute bleyne, scabbe, or royne.⁶
 Fro Jerusalem unto Burgoyne
 Ther nys a fairer nekke, iwys,
 To fele how smothe and softe it is.
 Hir throte also white of hewe,
 As snawe on braunche snawed newe.
 Of body ful wel wrought was she ;

¹ Well made. ² Little. ³ That is, dimpled. ⁴ Fashion (Fr. *jaçon*). ⁵ Proportion. ⁶ Pimple (Fr. *rogne*, itch). Cf. *As You Like It*, act ii., sc. 2, l. 8.

Men nedede not in no cuntre 560

A fairer body for to seke.

And of fyn orfrays¹ hadde she eke

A chapelet ; so semly oon

Ne werede never mayde upon.

And faire above that chapelet

A rose gerland hadde she sett.

She hadde a gay mirrour,

And with a riche gold tresour

Hir heed was tressed queyntely ;

Hir sleeves sewid fetously.²

570

And for to kepe hir hondis faire

Of gloves white she had a paire.

And she hadde on a cote of grene

Of cloth of Gaunt ; withouten wene,³

Wel semyde by hir apparayle

She was not wont to gret travayle.

For whan she kempte was fetisly,

And wel arayed and richely,

Thanne hadde she don al hir journe ;⁴

For merye and wel bigoon⁵ was she.

580

She hadde a lusty lyf in May,

She hadde no thought, by nyght ne day,

Of no thyng but if it were oonly

To graythe⁶ hir wel and uncouthly.⁷

Whan that this dore hadde opened me

This May, semely for to see,

I thanked hir as I best myghte,

¹ Cloth of gold. ² Neatly. ³ Doubt. ⁴ Day's work. ⁵ In a good way. ⁶ Dress. ⁷ Uncommonly, elegantly.

And axide hir how that she highte,
 And what she was, I axide eke.
 And she to me was nought unmeke, 590
 Ne of hir answer daungerous,

But faire answeride, and seide thus :

“ Lo, sir, my name is YDELNESSE ;
 So clepe men me, more and lesse.¹

Ful myghty and ful riche am I,
 And that of oon thyng, namely,²
 For I entende to no thyng
 But to my joye, and my pleyng,
 And for to kembe and tresse me.

“ Aqueynted am I and pryve 600
 With MYRTHE, lord of this gardyne,
 That fro the lande of Alexandryne
 Made the trees hidre be fette,³
 That in this gardyne ben y-sette.

And whan the trees were woxen on hight,
 This walle, that stant heere in thi sight,
 Dide Myrthe enclosen al aboute ;
 And these ymages al withoute
 He dide hem bothe entaile and peynte,
 That neithir ben jolyf ne queynte, 610
 But they ben ful of sorowe and woo,
 As thou hast seen a while agoo.

“ And ofte tyme hym to solace
 Sir Myrthe cometh into this place,
 And eke with hym cometh his meynee,⁴
 That lyven in lust and jolite.

¹ Great and small. ² Especially. ³ Fetched. ⁴ Retinue.

And now is Myrthe therynne to here
The briddis how they syngen clere,
The mavys¹ and the nyghtyngale,
And other joly briddis smale. 620

And thus he walketh to solace
Hym and his folk ; for swetter place
To pleyen ynne he may not fynde,
Al-though he sought oon in tyl Ynde.
The alther-faireste² folk to see
That in this world may founde be
Hathe Mirthe with hym in his route,
'That folowen hym always aboute."

Whan Ydelnesse tolde had al this,
And I hadde herkned wel, ywys, 630

Thanne seide I to dame Ydelnesse,
"Now also wisly God me blesse,
Sith Myrthe, that is so faire and fre,
Is in this yerde with his meyne,
Fro thilk assemble, if I may,
Shal no man werne³ me to-day,
That I this nyght ne mote it see.
For wel wene I there with hym be
A faire and joly companye
Fulfilled of alle curtesie." 640

And forth withoute wordis mo
In at the wicket went I tho,
That Ydelnesse hadde opened me,
Into that gardyne faire to see.

And whan I was ther-inne, 'wys,

¹ Song thrush. ² Fairest of all. ³ Hinder.

Myn herte was ful glad of this.
 For wel wende I ful sikerly
 Have been in Paradys erthly ;¹
 So faire it was, that trusteth wel,
 It semede a place espirituel. 650
 For certys, as at my devys,
 Ther is no place in Paradys
 So good inne for to dwelle or be,
 As in that gardyne, thoughte me.
 For there was many a bridde syngyng,
 Thorough-oute the yerde al thringyng.²
 In many places were nyghtyngales,
 Alpes,³ fynches, and wodewales,⁴
 That in her swete song deliten
 In thilke places as they habiten. 660
 There myghte men see many flokkes
 Of turtles and laverokkes.⁵
 Chalaundres⁶ fele sawe I there,
 That wery nygh forsongen were.
 And thrustles, terins,⁷ and mavys,
 That songen for to wynne hem prys,
 And eke to sormounte in her songe
 That other briddes hem amonge,
 By note made faire servyse.
 These briddes, that I you devise, 670
 They songe her songe as faire and wele
 As angeis don espirituel.

¹ The Terrestrial Paradise, according to Dante's cosmogony, was at the antipodes of Jerusalem. The Rose of the Blessed was beyond the Empyrean. See *Paradiso*, xxxi. ² Thronging. ³ Bullfinches, Orioles. ⁴ Larks. ⁵ A kind of lark. ⁶ The French *laurin*, named from its song.

And, trusteth wel, that I hem herd
 Ful lustily, and wel I ferde ;
 For never yitt sich melodye
 Was herd of man that myghte dye.
 Sich swete song was hem amonge,
 That me thought it no briddis songe,
 But it was wondir lyk to be
 Song of meremaydens of the see ;
 That, for her syngyng is so clere,
 Though we mermaydens clepe hem here
 In English, as is oure usaunce,
 Men clepe hem sereyns ¹ in Fraunce.

685

Ententif weren for to synge
 These briddis, that nought unkunnyng
 Were of her craft, and apprentys,
 For of songe sotil and wys.

And certis, whan I herde her songe,
 And sawe the grene place amonge,
 In herte I wexe so wondir gay,
 That I was never erst, er that day,
 So jolyf, nor so wel bigoo,²

690

Ne merye in herte, as I was thoo.
 And than wist I, and sawe ful welle,
 That Ydelnesse me servede welle,
 That me putte in sich jolite.

Hir freend wel ought I for to be,
 Sith she the dore of that gardyne
 Hadde opened, and me leten inne.

700

From hennes-forth, hou that I wroughte

¹ Sirens. Cf *Odyssey*, xii. 37. ² In so good a way.

I shal you tellen, as me thoughte.
 First wherof Myrthe servede there,
 And eke what folk there with hym were,
 Withoute fable I wol discryve.
 And of that gardyne eke as blyve
 I wole you tellen aftir this.
 The faire fasoun ¹ alle, ywys,
 That wel y-wrought was for the nones,
 I may not telle you alle at ones ; 710
 But as I may and can, I shalle
 By ordre tellen you it alle.

Ful faire servise and eke ful swete
 These briddis maden as they sete.
 Layes of love, ful wel sownyng,
 They songen in their yarkonyng ; ²
 Summe high, and summe eke lowe songe
 Upon the braunches grene spronge.
 The swetnesse of her melodye
 Made al myn herte in reverye. 720
 And whan that I hadde herde, I trowe,
 These briddis syngyng on a rowe,
 Than myght I not withholde me
 That I ne wente inne for to see
 Sir Myrthe ; for my desiryng
 Was hym to seen, over alle thyng,
 His countenaunce and his manere :
 That sight was tho to me ful dere.

Tho wente I forth on my right honde
 Doun by a lytel path I fonde 730

¹ Fashion. ² Jargon.

Of mentes ¹ fulle, and fenelle grene ;
 And faste by, withoute wene,²
 Sir Myrthe I fonde ; and right anoon
 Unto Sir Myrthe gan I goon,
 There as he was hym to solace.
 And with hym in that lusty place,
 So faire folk and so fresh had he,
 That whan I sawe, I wondrede me
 Fro whenne sicke folk myghte come,
 So faire they weren alle and some ; 740
 For they were lyk, as to my sighte,
 To angels, that ben fethered brighte.
 This folk, of which I telle you soo,
 Upon a karole ³ wenten thoo.
 A lady karoled ⁴ hem, that hyghte
 GLADNESSE, blisfulle, and the lighte.
 Wel coude she synge and lustyly,
 Noon half so wel and semely ;
 And couthe make in song sich refreynyng,
 It sat hir wondir wel to synge. 750
 Hir voice ful clere was and ful swete.
 She was nought rude ne unmete,
 But couthe ⁵ ynow of sich doying
 As longeth ⁶ unto karolyng :
 For she was wont in every place
 To syngen first, folk to solace,
 For syngyng moost she gaf hir to ;
 No craft hadde she so leef to do.

Tho myghtist thou karoles sene,

¹ Mint. ² Doubt. ³ Dance. ⁴ Caroled ⁵ Knew. ⁶ Belongeth

And folke daunce and mery bene, 76a
 And made many a faire tournyng
 Upon the grene gras springyng.
 There myghtist thou see these flowtours,
 Mynstrales, and eke jogelours,
 That wel to synge dide her peyne.
 Somme songe songes of Loreyne ;¹
 For in Loreyn her notes bee
 Fulle swetter than in this contre.

There was many a tymbestere,²
 And saillouris,³ that I dar wel swere 77a
 Couthe her craft ful parfitly.
 The tymbres up ful sotilly
 They casten, and hente fulle ofte
 Upon a fynger faire and softe,
 That they failide never mo.
 Ful fetys damyseles two,
 Ryght yonge, and fulle of semelyhede,
 In kirtles, and noon other wede,⁴
 And faire tressed every tresse,
 Hadde Myrthe doon, for his noblesse, 78a
 Amydde the karole for to daunce ;
 But herof lieth no remembraunce,
 Hou that they dauncede queyntely.

That oon wolde come alle pryvyly
 Agayn^b that other ; and whan they were
 To-gidre almost, they threwe yfere^c
 Her mouthis so, that thorgh her play

¹ Lorraine. ² Female player on the timbrel. ³ Dancers (Fr. *sau-
 lir*, to project; Lat. *salire*, to jump, leap). ⁴ Dress. ⁵ Toward
^a Together.

It sēmed as they kiste alway.
To dauncen welle koude they the gise ;
What shulde I more to you devyse ? 790

Ne bode ¹ I never thennes go,
Whiles that I sawe hem daunce so.

Upon the karolle wonder faste,
I gan biholde ; tii atte laste
A lady gan me for to espie,
And she was cleped CURTESIE,
The worshipfulle, the debonaire ;
I pray to God evere falle hir faire !
Ful curteisly she callede me,
“What do ye there, *beau sire* ? ” quod she ; 800
“Come, and if it lyke yow
To dauncen, dauncith with us now.”

And I withoute taryng
Wente into the karolyng.
I was abasshed never a delle,
But it to me likede right welle,
That Curtesie me clepede so,
And bad me on the daunce go.
For if I hadde durst, certeyn
I wolde have karoled right fayn, 810
As man that was to daunce right blithe

Thanne gan I loken ofte sithe ²
The shape, the bodies, and the cheres,
The countenaunce and the maneres
Of alle the folk that dauncede there,
And I shal telle what they were.

¹ Offered. ² Time.

Ful faire was Myrthe, ful longe and high,
 A fairer man I nevere sigh.¹
 As rounde as appille was his face,
 Ful rody and white in every place. 82c
 Fetyt he was and wel beseye,²
 With metely mouth and yen greye;
 His nose by mesure³ wrought ful right;
 Crispe was his heer, and eek ful bright.
 Hise shuldris of a large brede,
 And smalish in the girdilstede.⁴
 He semede lyke a portreiture,
 So noble he was of his stature,
 So faire, so joly, and so fetys,
 With lymes wrought at poynt devys,⁵ 83c
 Delyver, smert,⁶ and of grete myght;
 Ne sawe thou nevere man so lyght.
 Of berde unnethe hadde he no thyng,
 For it was in the firste spryng.
 Ful yonge he was, and mery of thought,
 And in samette,⁷ with briddis wrought,
 And with gold beten ful fetysly
 His body was clad ful richely.
 Wrought was his robe in straunge gise,
 And al to-slytered for queyntise 84c
 In many a place, lowe and hie.
 And shode he was with grete maistrie,
 With shoon decoped,⁸ and with laas,
 By druery,⁹ and by solas.

¹ Saw. ² That is, trim and well beseen. ³ Proportion. ⁴ Place
 of the girdle. ⁵ With precision. ⁶ Agile, quick. ⁷ Samite.
⁸ Stamped. Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 3318. ⁹ Gallantry.

His leef a rosyn¹ chapelet

Hadde made, and on his heed it set.

And wite ye who was his leef?

Dame Gladnesse there was hym so leef,

That syngith so wel with glad courage,

That from she was twelf yeer of age, 850

She of hir love graunt hym made.

Sir Mirthe hir by the fynger hadde

Daunsyng, and she hym also ;

Grete love was atwixe hem two.

Bothe were they faire and bright of hewe ;

She semede lyke a rose newe

Of colour, and hir flesh so tendre,

That with a brere² smale and slendre

Men myght it cleve, I dar wel seyne.

Hir forheed frounceles³ al pleyne, 860

Bent were hir browis two,

Hir yen greye, and glad also,

That laugheden ay in hir semblaunt,⁴

First or the mouth, by covenant.

I wot not what of hir nose I shal descryve ;

So faire hath no womman alyve.

Hir heer was yelowe, and clere shynyng,

I wot no lady so likyng.⁵

Of orfrays⁶ fresh was hir gerland,

I, which seyen have a thousand, 870

Saugh never, ywys, no gerlond yitt,

So wel y-wrought of silk as it.

¹ His love a rose. ² Briar. ³ Frownless (*i. e.*, without wrinkles) in their appearance. ⁴ Pleasing. ⁵ Cloth of gold.

And in an overgilt samet¹
 Cladde she was, by grete delit,
 Of which hir leef a robe werede,
 The myrier she in hir herte ferede.²

And next hir wente, in hir other side,
 The god of Love, that can devyde³
 Love, and as hym likith it be.
 But he can cherles daunten,⁴ he,
 And maken folkis pride fallen.
 And he can wel these lordis thrallen,
 And ladyes putt at lowe degre,
 Whan he may hem to proude see.

38c

This god of Love of his fasoun
 Was lyke no knave, ne quystroun;⁵
 His Beaute gretly was to preyse.
 But of his robe to devise
 I drede encombred for to be.
 For nought y-clad in silk was he,
 But alle in floures and in flourettes,
 Ypainted alle with amorettes;⁶
 And with losynges and scochouns,⁷
 With briddes, lybardes,⁸ and lyouns,
 And other beestis wrought ful welle.

890

His garnement⁹ was everydelle
 Portreied and wrought with floures,
 By dyvers medlyng¹⁰ of coloures.
 Floures there were of many gise

¹ Samite. ² Fared. ³ Apportion. ⁴ Humble. ⁵ Boy nor pedant (Fr. *cuisire*; first, cook; then, college servant; then, pedant)
⁶ By sweethearts. ⁷ Lozenges and scutcheons. ⁸ Leopards. ⁹ Garment ¹⁰ Mingling.

Y-sett by compas in assise ;¹ 900

Ther lakkide no flour to my dome,
 Ne nought so mych as flour of brome,
 Ne violete, ne eke pervynke,²
 Ne flour noon, that man can on thynke ;
 And many a rose leef ful longe,
 Was entermelled³ ther amonge :
 And also on his heed was sette
 Of roses reed a chapelett.

But nyghtyngales a fulle grete route,
 That flyen over his heed aboute, 910
 The leeves felden as they flyen,
 And he was alle with briddes wryen ;⁴
 With popynjay, with nyghtyngale,
 With chalaundre, and with wodewale,
 With fynche, with lark, and with archaungelle.⁵
 He semede as he were an aungelle,
 That doun were comen fro hevene clere.

Love hadde with hym a bachelere,
 That he mayde alleweyes with hym be ;
 SWETE-LOKYNG cleped was he. 920
 This bachelor stode biholdyng
 The daunce, and in his honde holdyng
 'Turke bowes two, fulle wel devysed had he.
 That oon of hem was of a tree
 'That bereth a fruyt of savour wykke ;
 Ful crokid was that foule stikke,
 And knotty here and there also,
 And blak as bery, or ony slo.

¹ Situation. ² Periwinkle. ³ Mixed. ⁴ Covered. ⁵ Titmouse.

That other bowe was of a plant
 Withoute wem,¹ I dar warant, 934
 Ful evene, and by proporcioun
 Treitys² and long, of ful good fasoun.
 And it was peynted wel and twythen,³
 And over al diapred and writen
 With ladyes and with bachelers,
 Fulle lyghtsom and glad of cheris.

These bowes two helde Swete-lokyng,
 That semede lyk no gadelyng.⁴
 And ten brode arowis hilde he there,
 Of which five in his right hond were. 940
 But they were shaven wel and dight,
 Nokked and fethered right ;
 And alle they were with gold bygoon,
 And stronge poynted everychoon,
 And sharpe for to kerven welle.
 But iren was ther noon ne stelle,
 For al was golde, men myght it see,
 Outake⁵ the fetheres and the tree.

The swiftest of these arowis fyve
 Out of a bowe for to dryve, 950
 And best fethered for to flee,
 And fairest eke, was clepid Beaute.
 That other arowe that hurteth lasse
 Was clepid (as I trowe) Symplesse.
 The thridde cleped was Fraunchise,
 That fethred was in noble wise

¹ Blemish. ² Well proportioned. Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 133
 Whittled. ⁴ Vagabond. ⁵ Except.

With valour and with curtesye.

The fourthe was cleped Compaignye,

That hevy for to shoten ys ;

But who-so shetith right, ywys, 96a

May therwith doon grete harme and wo.

The fifte of these, and waste also,

Faire-semblaunt men that arowe calle,

The leeste grevous of hem alle.

Yit can it make a ful grete wounde,

But he may hope his soris sounde,

That hurt is with that arowe, ywys ;

His wo the bette bistowed is.

For he may sonner have gladnesse,

Hir langour oughte be the lesse. 97a

Five arowis were of other gise,

That ben ful foule to devyse ;

For shaft and ende, soth for to telle,

Were also blak as fende in helle.

The first of hem is called Pride ,

'That other arowe next him biside,

It was ycleped Vylanye ;

That arowe was as with felonye

Unvenymed, and with spitous blame.

The thridde of hem was cleped Shame. 98a

'The fourthe Wanhope clepid is ;

The fifte, the Newe-thought, ywys.

These arowis that I speke of heere

Were alle fyve on oon maneere,

And alle were they resemblable.

To hem was wel sitting and able,

The foule croked bowe hidous,
 That knotty was, and al roynous.¹
 That bowe semede wel to shete
 These arowis fyve, that ben unmete
 And contrarye to that other fyve.
 But though I telle not as blyve
 Of her power, ne of her myght,
 Herafter shal I tellen right
 The soothe, and eke signyfiaunce,
 As fer as I have remembraunce :
 Alle shal be seid, I undirtake,
 Er of this book an ende I make.²

994

Now come I to my tale ageyn.
 But aldirfirst, I wole you seyn
 The fasoun and the countenaunces
 Of alle the folk that on the daunce is.
 The god of Love, jolyf and lyght,
 Ladde on his honde a lady bright,
 Of high prys, and of grete degre.
 This lady called was BEAUTE,
 And an arowe, of which I tolde.
 Ful wel thewed³ was she holde,
 Ne she was derk ne broun, but bright,
 And clere as the mone-lyght,
 Ageyn whom alle the sterres semen
 But smale candels, as we demen.
 Hir flesh was tendre as dewe of flour,
 Hir chere was symple as byrde in bour ;
 As whyte as lylle or rose in rys,⁴

1000

1014

¹ Rough. ² William of Lorris died without doing what he here promises. ³ Of good character. ⁴ On twig.

Hir face gentyl and tretys.
 Fetys she was, and smale to se,
 No wyntred ¹ browis hadde she,
 Ne popped ² hir, for it nedede nought
 To wyndre ³ hir, or to peynte hir ought. 1020
 Hir tresses yelow, and longe straughten,⁴
 Unto hir helys doun they raughten :
 Hir nose, hir mouth, and eyhe and cheke
 Wel wrought, and alle the remenaunt eke.

A ful grete savour and a swote,
 Me thoughte in myn herte rote,
 As helpe me God, whan I remembre,
 Of the fasoun of every membre !
 In world is noon so faire a wight ;
 For yonge she was, and hewed bright 1030
 Sore plesaunt, and fetys with alle,
 Gente,⁵ and in hir myddille smalle.

Biside Beaute gede ⁶ RICHESSE,
 And highte "Lady" of gret noblesse,
 And gret of prys in every place.
 But who so durste to hir trespace, —
 Or til hir folk, — in werk or dede,
 He were fulle hardy, out of drede,
 For bothe she helpe and hyndre may.
 And that is nought of yisterday 1040
 That riche folk have fulle gret myght
 To helpe, and eke to greve a wyght.

¹ Probably, rouged. ² Made a puppet of herself. ³ The corresponding word in the French original is *guignier*, a sort of cherry tree, and the meaning is that Beauty needed no artificial coloring. *Vardée*, painted, is used in connection with *guignier*. ⁴ Stretched. Gentle. ⁵ Went (Ger. *gehen*, to go).

The beste and the grettest of valour
 Diden Rychesse ful gret honour,
 And besy weren hir to serve,
 For that they wolde hir love deserve.
 They cleped hir "Lady," grete and smalle ;
 This wide world hir dredith alle.

This world is alle in hir daungere,¹
 Hir court hath many a losengere,² 1050
 And many a traytour envious,
 That ben ful besy and curyous
 For to dispreisen, and to blame
 That best deserven love and name.
 Bifore the folk hem to bigilen,
 These losengeris hem preyse and smylen,
 And thus the world with word anoynten ;
 But aftirward they prile³ and poynten
 The folk right to the bare boon,
 Bihynde her bak whan they ben goon, 1060
 And foule abate the folkis prys ;
 Ful many a worthy man, ywys,
 An hundrid, have they do⁴ to dye.
 These losengers thorough flaterye
 Have maad folk ful straunge be,
 There hem oughte be pryve.
 Wel yvel mote they thryve and thee,⁵
 And yvel a-chyved mote they be —
 These losengers ful of envye !
 No good man loveth her companye. 1070
 Richesse a robe of purpur on hadde,

¹ Jurisdiction. ² Liar. ³ Pierce. Caused. ⁵ Prosper.

Ne trowe not that I lye or madde ;¹
 For in this world is noon hir lyche,
 Ne by a thousand deelle so riche,
 Ne noon so faire ; for it ful welle
 With orfrays leyd was everydeelle,
 And portraied in the ribanynges
 Of dukes storyes, and of kynges.
 And with a bend of gold tasseled,
 And knoppis fyne of gold enameled, 1080
 Aboute hir nekke of gentyl entayle²
 Was shete the riche chevesaile,³
 In which ther was fulle gret plente
 Of stones clere and bright to see.
 Rychesse a girdelle hadde upon,
 The bokele of it was of a stoon,
 Of vertu gret, and mochel of myght
 For who so bare the stoon so bright,
 Of venym durst hym no thing doute,
 While he the stoon hadde hym aboute. 1090
 That stoon was gretly for to love,
 And tyl a riche man byhove
 Worth alle the gold in Rome and Frise.
 The mourdaunt,⁴ wrought in noble wise,
 Was of a stoon fulle precious,
 That was so fyne and vertuous,
 That hole a man it koude make
 Of palasie, and tothe ake.
 And yit the stoön hadde such a grace,
 That he was siker in every place 1100

Become mad. ² Cutting. ³ Necklace. ⁴ Tongue.

Alle thilke day not blynde to bene,
 That fastyng myghte that stoon seene.
 The barres were of gold ful fyne,
 Upon a tyssu of satyne,
 Fulle hevy, gret, and no thyng lyght,
 In everiche was a besaunt wight.¹

Upon the tresses of Richesse
 Was sette a cercle for noblesse
 Of brend gold, that fulle lyghte shoon ;
 So faire trowe I was never noon.
 But she were kunnyng for the nonys,
 That koude devyse alle the stonys
 That in that cercle shewen clere ;
 It is a wondir thing to here.
 For no man koude preyse or gesse
 Of hem that valewe or richesse.

1116

Rubyes there were, saphires, jagounces,²
 And emeraudes, more than two ounces.
 But alle byfore ful sotilly
 A fyn charboncle sette saugh I.
 The stoon so clere was and so bright,
 That, also soone as it was nyght,
 Men myghte seen to go for nede
 A myle or two, in lengthe and brede.
 Sich lyght tho sprang oute of the stone,
 That Richesse wondir brighte shone,
 Bothe hir heed and alle hir face,
 And eke aboute hir al the place.

1120

Dame Richesse on hir honde gan lede

¹ The weight of a bezant of gold. ² Jacintha.

A yong man fulle of semelyhede, 1130

That she best loved of ony thing ;

His lust was mych in housholding.

In clothynge was he ful fetys,

And lovede to have welle hors of prys.

He wende to have reproved be

Of theft or moordre, if that he

Hadde in his stable ony hakeney.

And therfore ne desired ay

To be aqueynted with Richesse ;

For alle his purpos, as I gesse, 1140

Was for to make gret dispense,

Withoute wernyng or diffense.

And Richesse myght it wel sustene,

And hir dispence welle mayntene,

And hym alwey sich plente sende,

Of gold and silver for to dispende

Withoute lakke or daunger,

As it were poured in a garner.

And after on the daunce wente

LARGESSE, that settith al hir entente 1150

For to be honourable and free ;

Of Alexandres kyn was she.

Hir moste joye was, ywys,

Whan that she gaf, and seide, “ Have this.”

Not Avarice, the foule caytyf,

Was half to gripe so ententyf,

As Largesse is to geve and spende.

And God ynough alwey hir sende,

So that the more she gaf away,

The more, ywys, she hadde alwey. 1160

Gret loos¹ hath Largesse, and gret pris ;
 For bothe wyse folk and unwys
 Were hooly to hir baundon² brought,
 So wel with giftes hath she wrought.
 And if she hadde an enemy,
 I trowe that she coude tristely³
 Make hym fulle soone hir freend to be,
 So large of gift, and free was she ;
 Therfore she stode in love and grace
 Of riche and pover in every place. 1170

A fulle gret fool is he, ywys,
 That bothe riche and nygart is.
 A lord may have no maner vice,
 That greveth more than avarice.
 For nygart never with strengthe of honde
 May wyne gret lordship or londe.
 For freendis alle to fewe hath he
 To doon⁴ his wille perfourmed be.
 And who-so wole have freendis heere,
 He may not holde his tresour deere. 1180
 For by ensample I telle this,
 Right as an adamaund, iwys,
 Can drawn to hym sotyly
 The yren, that is leid therby,
 So drawith folkes hertis, ywis,
 Silver and gold that geven is.

Largesse had on a robe fresh
 Of riche purpur sarlynysh.⁵
 Wel fourmed was hir face and cleere,

¹ Land. ² Disposal. ³ Trustfully. ⁴ Cause. ⁵ Sarcenet.

And opened hadde she hir colere ; 1190
For she right there hadde in present
Unto a lady maad present
Of a gold broche, ful wel y-wrought.
And certys it myssatte hir nought ;
For thorgh hir smokke wrought with silk,
The flesh was seen as white as mylk.

Largesse, that worthy was and wys,
Hilde by the honde a knyght of prys,
Was sibbe¹ to Artour of Britaigne.
And that was he that bare the ensaigne 1200
Of worship, and the gounfaucoun.²
And yit he is of sich renoun,
That men of hym seye faire thynges
Byfore barouns, erles, and kynges.
This knyght was comen alle newly
Fro tourneyng faste by ;
There hadde he don gret chyvalrie
Thorgh his vertu and his maistrie,
And for the love of his lemman³
He caste doun many a doughty man. 1210

And next hym dauncede dame FRAUNCHISE,
Arayed in fulle noble gyse.
She was not broune ne dunne of hewe,
But white as snowe falle newe.
Hir nose was wrought at poynt devys,
For it was gentil and tretys ;⁴
With eyen gladde, and browes bente ;
Hir here doun to hir helis wente.

¹ Kin. ² Gonfanon banner ³ Sweetheart. ⁴ Straight.

And she was symple as dowve of tree ;
 Ful debonaire of herte was she. 1220
 She durste never seyn ne do,
 But that that hir longede¹ to.
 And if a man were in distresse,
 And for hir love in hevynesse,
 Hir herte wolde have fulle gret pite,
 She was so amiable and free.
 For were a man for hir bistadde,
 She wolde ben right sore adradde,
 That she dide over gret outrage,
 But she hym holpe his harme to aswage ; 1230
 Hir thought it elles a vylanye.²

And she hadde on a sukkenye,³
 That not of hempe ne heerdys⁴ was ;
 So fair was noon in alle Arras.
 Lord, it was ridled⁵ fetysly !
 Ther nas a poynt, trewely,
 That it nas in his right assise.
 Fulle wel y-clothed was Fraunchise,
 For ther is no cloth sittith bet
 On damyselle, than doth roket.⁶ 1240
 A womman wel more fetys is
 In roket than in cote, ywis.
 The white roket rydled faire
 Bitokeneth that fulle debonaire
 And swete was she that it bere.
 Bi hir daunced a bachelere ;

Beauged. ² Base act. ³ Frock (Fr. *souquenille*, a loose frock;
 Hard, coarse flax. ⁵ Worked, either plaited or ornamented in
 the style of lace figures. ⁶ Rochet (Fr. *rochet*, a smock-frock).

I can not telle you what he highte,¹
 But faire he was, and of good highte
 Alle hadde he be, I sey no more,
 The lordis sone of Wyndesore.² 1250

And next that dauncede CURTESYE,
 'That preised was of lowe and hye,
 For neither proude ne foole was she.
 She for to daunce callede me, —
 I pray God geve hir right good grace! —
 Whanne I come first into the place.
 She was not nyce,³ ne outrageous,
 But wys and ware, and vertuous,
 Of faire speche, and of faire answer; ;
 Was never wight mysseid of hire ; 1260
 She ne bar rancour to no wight.
 Clere broune she was, and therto bright
 Of face, of body avenaunt,⁴
 I wot no lady so plesaunt ;
 She were worthy for to bene
 An emperesse or crowned quene.

And by hir wente a knyght dauncyng
 That worthy was and wel spekyng,
 And ful wel koude he don honour.
 The knyght was faire and styf in stour,⁵ 1270
 And in armure a semely man,
 And wel-biloved of his lemman.

Faire IDILNESSE thanne saugh I,
 That alwey was me faste by.

¹ Was named. ² That 's, a son of Henry III foolish. ³ Agree-
 able. ⁴ Conflict

Of hir have I, withoute fayle,
 'Told yow the shap and apparayle ;
 For, as I seide, loo, that was she
 That dide to me so gret bounte,
 That she the gate of the gardyn
 Undide, and lete me passen in,
 And after daunced, as I gesse.
 And she fulfilled of lustynesse,
 That nas not yit twelf yeer of age,
 With herte wylde, and thought volage.¹
 Nyce she was, but she ne mente
 Noon harme ne slight in hir entente,
 But oonly lust and jolyte.
 For yonge folk wole, witen ye,
 Have lytel thought but on her play.

1280

Hir lemman² was biside alway,
 In sich a gise that he hir kyste
 At alle tymes that hym lyste,
 That alle the daunce myght it see ;
 They make no force of pryvete.
 For who spake of hem yvel or welle,
 They were ashamed never adelle,
 But men myghte seen hem kisse there,
 As it two yonge dowves were.
 For yong was thilke bachelere,
 Of beaute wot I noon his pere ;
 And he was right of sich an age,
 As youthe is leef, and sich corage.

1290

1300

The lusty folk that dauncede there,

¹ Flighty. ² Sweetheart.

And also other that with hem were
That weren alle of her meyne,
Ful hende ¹ folk, and wys, and free,
And folk of faire port truely,
There were alle comunly.

Whanne I hadde seen the countenaunces
Of hem that ladden thus these daunces, 1310
Thanne hadde I wille to gon and see
The gardyne that so lykede me,
And loken on these faire loreyes,²
On pyn trees, cedres, and oliveris.
The daunces thanne eended were ;
For many of hem that dauncede there
Were with her loves went away
Undir the trees to have hir pley.

A, Lord ! they lyvede lustyly !
A gret fool were he sikirly, 1320
That nolde, his thanks,³ such lyf lede !
For this dar I seyn out of drede,
That who-so myghte so wel fare,
For better lyf durst hym not care,
For ther nys so good paradys,
As to have a love at his devys.

Oute of that place wente I thoo,
And in that gardyn gan I goo,
Pleyng a-longe fulle meryly.
The god of Love fulle hastely 1330
Unto hym Swete-lokyng clepte,⁴
No lenger wolde he that she kepte

¹ Courteous. ² Laurel trees. ³ Willingly. ⁴ Called

His bowe of gold, that shoon so bright.
 He hadde hym bent anoon ryght ;
 And he fulle soone sette an ende,
 And at a braid¹ he gan it bende,
 And toke hym of his arowes fyve,
 Fulle sharp and redy forto dryve.
 Now God that sittith in mageste
 Fro deedly woundes he kepe me ! 1340
 If so be that he hadde me shette,²
 For if I with his arowe mette,
 It hadde me greved sore, iwys.
 But I, that no thyng wist of this,
 Wente up and doun fulle many a wey,
 And he me folwede fast alwey ;
 But no-where wold I reste me,
 Tille I hadde in alle the gardyn be.

The gardyn was by mesuryng
 Right evene and square in compassing ; 1350
 It as long was as it was large.
 Of fruyt hadde every tree his charge,³
 But it were any hidous tree,
 Of which ther were two or three.
 There were, and that wote I fulle welle,
 Of pome-garnettys a fulle gret delle ;
 That is a fruyt fulle welle to lyke,
 Namely to folk whanne they ben sike.
 And trees there were of gret foisoun,⁴
 That baren notes⁵ in her sesoun, 1360
 Such as mer notemygges calle,

¹ All at once. ² Shot. ³ Freight. ⁴ Abundance. ⁵ Nuts.

That swote of savour ben with-alle.
And almandres gret plente,
Fyges, and many a date tree
There wexen, if men hadde nede,
Thorgh the gardyn in length and brede.

Ther was eke wexyng many a spice,
As clowe-gelofre,¹ and lycorice,
Gyngevre, and greyn de Parys,²
Canelle,³ and setewale⁴ of prys, 1370
And many a spice delitable,
To eten whan men rise fro table.
And many homly⁵ trees ther were,
That peches, coynes,⁶ and apples beere,
Medlers, plowmes, perys, chesteyns,⁷
Cherys, of which many oon fayne is,
Notes, aleys,⁸ and bolas,⁹
That forto seen it was solas ;
With many high lorey¹⁰ and pyn,
Was renged clene alle that gardyn ; 1380
With cipres, and with olyvers,
Of which that nygh no plente heere is.
There were elmes grete and stronge,
Maples, asshe, oke, aspe, planes longe,
Fyne ew, popler, and lyndes faire,
And othere trees fulle many a payre.
What shulde I telle you more of it ?
'There were so many trees yet,
That I shulde all encombred be,
Er I hadde rekened every tree. 1390

¹ Clove. ² Paradise. ³ Cinnamon. ⁴ Valerian. ⁵ Native.
⁶ Quinces. ⁷ Chestnuts. ⁸ Aloes. ⁹ Bullace plums. ¹⁰ Laurel

These trees were sette, that I devyse,
 One from another in assyse
 Five fadome or syxe, I trowe so,
 But they were hye and great also :
 And for to kepe oute well the sonne,
 The croppes¹ were so thycke yronne,
 And every braunche in other knytte,
 And full of grene leves sytte,
 That sonne myghte there noon dyscende,
 Lest the tender grasses shende.² 1400
 There myghte men does and roes yse,
 And of squyrels ful gret plente,
 From bowe to bowe alwaye lepynge.
 Connies there were also playenge,
 That comyn out of her clapers³
 Of sundry colours and maners,
 And maden many a tourneynge
 Upon the freshe grasse spryngynge.

In places sawe I welles there,
 In whych there no frogges were, 1410
 And fayre in shadowe was every welle ;
 But I ne can the nombre telle
 Of stremys smale, that by devyse
 Myrthe hadde done come through condyse,⁴
 Of whych the water in rennyng
 Gan make a noyse full lykyng.⁵

Aboute the brynkes of these welles.
 And by the stremes over al elles
 Sprange up the grasse, as thycke yset

¹ Tops ² Be ruined. ³ Burrows. ⁴ Conduits. ⁵ Pleasing

And softe as any veluet, 1420
 On whych men myght hys lemman leye,
 As on a fetherbed to pleye,
 For the erthe was ful softe and swete.
 Through moysture of the welle wete
 Spronge up the sote grene gras,
 As fayre, as thycke, as myster¹ was.
 But moche amended it the place,
 That therthe was of suche a grace
 That it of floures hath plente,
 That both in somer and wynter be. 1430

There sprange the vyolet al newe,
 And fresshe pervynke² ryche of hewe,
 And floures yelow, white, and rede ;
 Suche plente grewe there never in mede.
 Ful gaye was al the grounde, and queynt,
 And poudred, as men had it peynt,
 With many a freshe and sondry floure,
 That casten up ful good savoure.

I wol not longe holde you in fable
 Of al this garden delectable. 1440
 I mote my tonge stynten neJe,
 For I ne maye withouten drede
 Naught tellen you the Beaute alle,
 Ne halfe the bounte therewythalle.

I went on ryght hande and on lefte
 A'boute the place ; it was not left,
 Tyl I had al the garden bene
 In the esters³ that men myghte sene.

¹ Need. ² Periwinkle. ³ Passages.

And thus whyle I wente in my playe,
 The god of Love me folowed aye. 1450
 Ryght as an hunter can abyde
 The beest, tyl he seeth hys tyde
 To shoten, at goodnesse,¹ to the dere,
 When that hym nedeth go no nere.

And so befyl I rested me
 Besydes a wel under a tree,
 Whych tree in Fraunce men cal a pyne.
 But, syth the tyme of kyng Pepyne,
 Ne grewe there tree in mannes syght
 So fayre, ne so wel woxe in hyght ; 1460
 In al that yarde so hygh was none.
 And spryngyng in a marble stone
 Hadde Nature set, the soth to telle,
 Under that pyne tree a welle.
 And on the border al withoute
 Was wryten on the stone aboute
 Letteres smale, that sayden thus :
 " Here starfe the fayre Narcisus."

Narcisus was a bachelere,
 That Love hadde caught in hys daungere,² 1470
 And in hys nette gan hym so strayne,
 And dyd hym so to wepe and playne,
 That nede hym muste hys lyfe forgo.
 For a fayre lady, that hyght Echo,
 Hym loved over any creature,
 And gan for hym suche payne endure,
 That on a tyme she hym tolde,

¹ Advantage. ² Jurisdiction.

That yf he her y-loven nolde,
 That her behovede nedes dye, —
 There laye none other remedye. 1480
 But nathelesse, for hys beaute
 So fyers and daungerous was he,
 That he nolde graunte hir askyng,
 For wepyng, ne for faire praiyng.
 And whanne she herd hym werne ¹ soo,
 She hadde in herte so gret woo,
 And took it in so gret dispite,
 That she, withoute more respite,
 Was deed anoon. But er she dide,
 Fulle pitously to God she preide, 1490
 That proude hertid Narcisus,
 That was in love so daungerous,²
 Myght on a day ben hampred so
 For love, and ben so hoot for woo,
 That never he myght to joye atteygne ;
 And that he shulde feele in every veyne
 What sorowe trewe lovers maken,
 That ben so velaynesly forsaken.

This prayer was but resonable,
 Therefore God helde it forme and stable : 1500
 For Narcisus, shortly to telle,
 By aventure come to that welle
 To resten hym in that shadowing,
 A day whanne he come fro huntyng.
 This Narcisus hadde suffred paynes
 For rennyng alday in the playnes,

¹ Refuse. ² Haughty.

And was for thurst in grete distresse
 Of heet, and of his werynesse,
 That hadde his breth almost bynomen.¹

Whanne he was to that wel y-comen, 1510
 That shadwid was with braunches grene.
 He thoughte of thilke water shene
 To drynke and fresshe hym wel withalle;
 And doun on knees he gan to falle,
 And forth his heed and necke he straught²
 To drynken of that welle a draught.
 And in the water anoon was seen
 His nose, his mouth, his yen sheen,
 And he therof was alle abasshed;
 His owne shadowe was hym bytrasshed.³ 1520
 For welle wende he the forme see
 Of a childe⁴ of gret beaute.
 Welle kouthe Love hym wreke thoo
 Of daunger and of pride also,
 That Narcisus somtyme hym beere.

He quytte hym welle his guerdoun there;
 For he musede so in the welle,
 That, shortly alle the sothe to telle,
 He lovede his owne shadowe soo,
 That atte laste he starf⁵ for woo. 1530
 For whanne he saugh that he his wille
 Myght in no maner wey fulfille,
 And that he was so faste caught
 That he hym kouthe comforte nought,
 He loste his witte right in that place,

¹ Taken away. ² Stretched. ³ Played false. ⁴ Youth. ⁵ Died.

And diede withynne a lytel space.

And thus his warisoun ¹ he took

For the lady that he forsook.

Ladyes, I preye ensample takith,

Ye that ageyns youre love mistakith : 154c

For if her deth be yow to wite,²

God kan ful welle youre while quyte.

Whanne that this lettre, of which I telle,

Hadde taught me that it was the welle

Of Narcisus in his beaute,

I gan anoon withdrawe me,

Whanne it felle in my remembraunce,

That hym bitidde such myschaunce.

But at the laste thanne thought I,

That scatheles, fulle sykerly, 155o

I myght unto the welle goo.

Wherof shulde I abaisshen soo ?

Unto the welle than wente ³ I me,

And doun I loutede ⁴ for to see

The clere water in the stoon,

And eke the grave'le, which that shoon

Down in the botme, as silver fyn,

For of the welle, this is the fyn,

In world is noon so clere of hewe.

The water is evere fresh and newe 156o

That welmeth ⁵ with wawis brighte

The mountance of two fynger highte.

Aboute it is gras spryngyng,

For moiste so thikke and wel likyng,

¹ Reward. ² Blaine ³ Turned. ⁴ Bent. ⁵ Bubbleth

That it ne may in wynter dye,
No more than may the see be drye.

Downe atte the botme sette sawe I
Two cristalle stonys craftely
In thilke fresh and faire welle.
But o thing sothly dar I telle, 1570
That ye wole holde a gret mervayle
Whanne it is tolde, withouten fayle.
For whanne the sonne, clere in sighte,
Cast in that welle his bemys brighte,
And that the heete descendid is,
Thanne taketh the cristalle stoon, ywis,
Agayn the sonne an hundred hewis,
Blewe, yelow, and rede, that fresh and newe is
Yitt hath the merveilous cristalle
Such strengthe, that the place overalle, 1580
Bothe foule and tree, and leves grene,
And alle the yerde in it is seene.
And for to don you to undirstonde,
'To make ensample wole I fonde.

Ryght as a myrrour openly
Shewith alle thing that stondith therby,
As welle the colour as the figure,
Withouten ony coverture ;
Right so the cristalle stoon shynyng,
Withouten ony disseyvyng, 1590
The entrees of the yerde accusith¹
To hym that in the water musith.
For evere in which half² that ye be,

¹ The passages of the enclosure revealeth. ² Side.

Ye may welle half the gardyne se.
 And if he turne, he may right welle
 Sene the remenaunt everydelle.
 For ther is noon so litil thyng
 So hidde ne closid with shittyn¹,
 That it ne is sene, as though it were
 Peyntid in the cristalle there.

1600

This is the mirroure perilous,
 In which the proude Narcisus
 Sawe alle his face faire and bright,
 That made hym swithe to ligge upright.²
 For who-so loketh in that mirroure,
 Ther may no thyng ben his socour
 That he ne shalle there sene some thyng
 That shal hym lede into laughyng.
 Fulle many worthy man hath it
 Y-blent; for folk of grettist wit
 Ben soone caught heere and awayted;³
 Withouten respite ben they baited.

1610

Heere comth to folk of newe rage,
 Heere chaungith many wight corage;
 Heere lith no rede⁴ ne witte therto;
 For Venus sone, daun Cupido,
 Hathe sowne there of love the seed,
 That help ne lith there noon, ne rede,
 So cerclith it the welle aboute.
 His gynnes hath he sett withoute
 Ryght for to cacche in his panter⁵

1620

¹ Shutting. ² Quickly lie on his back (*i. e.*, die). ³ Watched for Counsel. ⁴ Snares.

These damoysels and bachelers.
 Love wille noon other bridde cacche,
 Though he sette oither nette or lacche.¹
 And for the seed that heere was sown,
 This welle is clepid, as welle is knowen,
 The Welle of Love, of verray right,
 Of which ther hath ful many a wight
 Spoke in bookis dyversely.

But they shulle never so verily 1636
 Descripcioun of the welle heere,
 Ne eke the sothe of this matere,
 As ye shulle, whanne I have undo
 The craft that hir bilongith too.

Alle way me likede for to dwelle.
 To sene the cristalle in the welle,
 That shewide me fulle openly
 A thousand thinges faste by.
 But I may say, in sory houre
 Stode I to loken on to poure. 1640
 For sithen I sore sighede,
 That mirrour hath me now entriked.²
 But hadde I first knowen in my wit
 The vertues and strengthes of it,
 I nolde not have mused there ;
 Me hadde bette bene ellis where,
 For in the snare I felle anoon,
 That hath bitrissed³ many oon.

In thilke mirrour sawe I tho, 1650
 Among a thousand thinges mo,

¹ Snare. ² Ensnares. ³ Cf. l. 1520.

A roser¹ charged full of rosis,
That with an hegge aboute enclosid is.
Tho had I sich lust and envie,
That for Parys ne for Pavie,²
Nolde I have left to goon att see
There grettist hepe of roses be.

Whanne I was with this rage hent,
That caught hath many a man and shent,³
Toward the roser gan I go.

And whanne I was not fer therfro, 1660

The savour of the roses swote
Me smote right to the herte rote,
As I hadde alle enbawmed be.

And if I ne hadde endouted me
To have ben hatid or assailed,
Me thankis,⁴ wole I not have failed

To pulle a rose of alle that route
To beren in myn honde aboute,
And smellen to it where I wente ;

But ever I dredde me to repente, 1670

And leste it grevede or forthoughte
The lord that thilke gardyn wroughte.

Of roses ther were grete wone,⁵

So faire woxe never in Rone.⁶

Of knoppes clos,⁷ some sawe I there,
And some wel beter woxen were.

And some ther ben of other moysoun,⁸

That drowe nygh to her sesoun,

¹ Rose-bush (Fr. *rosier*). Pavia. ³ Ruined. ⁴ Willingly.
Heap. ⁵ That is, in Provence. ⁷ Closed. ⁸ Harvest.

And sped hem faste for to sprede ;
 I love welle sich roses rede ; 168a
 For brode roses, and open also,
 Ben passed in a day or two ;
 But knoppes wille freshe be
 Two dayes atte leest, or thre.
 The knoppes gretly likede me,
 For fairer may ther no man se.
 Who-so myghte have oon of alle,
 It ought hym ben fulle lief withalle.
 Might I oon gerlond of hem geten,
 For no richesse I wolde it leten. 169c

Among the knoppes I chesé oon
 So faire, that of the remenaunt noon
 Ne preise I half so welle as it,
 Whanne I avise it in my wit.
 For it so welle was enlomyned
 With colour reed, as welle ifyned
 As nature couthe it make faire.
 And it hath leves wel foure paire,
 That Kynde¹ hath sett thorgh his knowyng
 Aboute the rede roses spryngyng. 170c
 The stalke was as rishe² right,
 And theron stode the knoppe upright,
 That it ne bowide upon no side.
 The swote smelle spronge so wide,
 That it dide alle the place aboute.³
 Whanne I hadde smelled the savour swote,
 No wille hadde I fro thens yit goo,

¹ Nature. ² Rush. ³ Did [fill] all the place about.

But somdelle neer ¹ it wente I thoo
 To take it ; but myn hond for drede
 Ne dorste I to the rose bedē,² 1710
 For thesteles sharpe of many maners,
 Netles, thornes, and hokede breres ;
 For mychel they distourblede me,
 For sore I dradde to harmed be.

The god of Love, with bowe bent,
 That alle day sette hadde his talent ³
 To pursuen and to spien me,
 Was stondyng by a fige tree.
 And whanne he sawe hou that I
 Hadde chosen so ententify 1720
 The botheum ⁴ more unto my paie,⁵
 Than any other that I say,⁶
 He toke an arowe fulle sharply whette,
 And in his bowe whanne it was sette,
 He streight up to his ere drough
 The stronge bowe, that was so tough,
 And shette att me so wondir smerte,
 That thorgh myn ye unto myn herte
 The takel smote, and depe it wente.
 And therwith alle such colde me hente, 1730
 That under clothes warme and softe,
 Sithen that day I have chevered ⁷ ofte.

Whanne I was hurt thus in a stounde,⁸
 I felle down platte unto the grounde.
 Myn herte failed and feynted ay,

¹ Nearer. ² Offer. ³ Inclination. ⁴ Bud (button). ⁵ Satisfac-
 ion. ⁶ Saw. ⁷ Shivered. ⁸ Moment.

And longe tyme a-swoone I lay.
 But whanne I come out of swonyng,
 And hadde witt, and my felyng,
 I was alle maate,¹ and wende fulle welle
 Of bloode have loren a fulle gret delle. 1740
 But certes the arowe that in me stode,
 Of me ne drewe no drope of blode,
 For-why I founde my wounde alle drie.
 Thanne toke I with myn hondis tweie
 The arowe, and ful fast out it plighte,²
 And in the pullyng sore I sighte.³
 So at the last the shaft of tree
 I drough out, with the fethers thre.
 But yit the hokede heed, y-wis,
 The whiche Beaute callid is, 1750
 Gan so depe in myn herte passe,
 That I it myghte nought arace ;⁴
 But in myn herte stille it stode.

Al bledde I not a drope of blode,
 I was bothe anguyssous and trouble.
 For the perille that I sawe double,
 I nyste what to seye or to do,
 Ne gete a leche my woundis to ;
 For neithir thurgh grasse ne rote,
 Ne hadde I hope of helpe ne bote. 1760
 But to the bothum⁵ evermo
 Myn herte drewe ; for alle my wo,
 My thought was in noon other thing.
 For hadde it ben in my kepyng,

¹ Dejected. ² Plucked. ³ Sighed. ⁴ Wrest. ⁵ *but*.

It wolde have brought my lyf agayn.
 For certis evenly, I dar wel seyn,
 The sight oonly, and the savour,
 Aleggede ¹ mych of my langour.

Thanne gan I for to drawe me
 Toward the bothom faire to se, 1770

And Love hadde gete hym in his throwe ²

Another arowe into his bowe,

And for to shete gan hym dresse ;

The arowis name was Symplesse.

And whanne that love gan nyghe ³ me nere,

He drowe it up, withouten were, ⁴

And shette at me with alle his myght,

So that this arowe anoon right

Thurgh-outen eigh, as it was founde,

Into myn herte hath maad a wounde. 1780

Thanne I anoon dide al my crafte

For to drawen oute the shafte,

And therwith alle I sighede efte. ⁵

But in myn herte the heed was lefte,

Which ay encreside my desire

Unto the bothom drawe nere ;

And evermo that me was woo

The more desir hadde I to goo

Unto the roser, where that grewe

The freysshe bothum so bright of hewe. 1790

Betir me were to have leten be,

But it bihovede nedes me

To done right as myn herte badde.

¹ Alleviated. ² Time ³ ^a N'gh " is a verb. ⁴ Doubt. ⁵ Agun

For evere the body must be ladde
 Aftir the herte ; in wele and woo,
 Of force togidre they must goo.
 But never this archer wolde feyne
 To shete at me with alle his peyne,
 And for to make me to hym mete.

The thridde arowe he gan to shete, 1806
 Whanne best his tyme he myght espie,
 The which was named Curtesie,
 Into myn herte he dide avale.¹

A-swoone I felle, bothe deed and pale ;
 Long tyme I lay, and stireded nought,
 Tille I abraide² out on my thought.
 And faste thanne I avysede me
 To drawe oute the shafte of tree ;
 But evere the heed was left bihynde
 For ought I couthe pulle or wynde. 1810
 So sore it stikith whanne I was hit,
 That by no craft I myght flit³ it ;
 But anguyssous and fulle of thought
 I lefte ; siche woo my wounde ay wrought,
 That somonede me al-way to goo
 Towarde the rose, that plesede me soo ;
 But I ne durste in no manere
 Bi-cause the archer was so nere.

For evermore gladly, as I rede,
 Brent child of fier hath mych drede. 1820
 And, certis, yit for al my peyne,
 Though that I sigh⁴ yit arwis reyne,

¹ Let down. ² Started. ³ Escape. ⁴ Saw.

And grounde quarels ¹ sharpe of steelle,
 Ne for no payne that I myghte feelle,
 Yit myght I not my-silf witholde
 The faire roser to biholde ;
 For Love me gaf sich hardement
 For to fulfille his comaundement.
 Upon my fete I rose up thanne
 Feble, as a forwoundid man ;
 And forth to gon my myght I sette,
 And for the archer nolde I lette.²
 Toward the roser fast I drowe ;
 But thornes sharpe mo than ynowe
 Ther were, and also thisteles thikke,
 And breres brymme ³ for to prikke,
 That I ne myghte gete grace
 The rowe thornes for to passe
 To sene the roses fresshe of hewe.
 I must abide, though it me rewe,
 The hegge aboute so thikke was,
 That closide the roses in compas.

1830

1840

But o thing lykede me right welle ;
 I was so nygh, I myghte fele
 Of the bothom the swote odour,
 And also se the fresshe colour ;
 And that right gretly likede me,
 That I so neer it myghte se.
 Sich joie anoon therof hadde I,
 That I forgate my maladie.
 To sene I hadde siche delit,

1850

¹ Bolts. ² Would [†] not stint. ³ Furious

Of sorwe and angre I was al quyte,¹
 And of my woundes that I hadde thore;²
 For no thing liken me myghte more,
 Than dwellen by the roser ay,
 And thennes never to passe away.

But whanne a while I hadde be thare,
 The god of Love, which al to-share
 Myn herte with his arwis kene,
 Castith hym to geve me woundis grene. 186c
 He shette³ at me fulle hastily
 An arwe named Company,
 The whiche takelle is fulle able
 To make these ladies merciabe.
 Thanne I anoon gan chaungen hewe
 For grevaunce of my wounde newe,
 That I agayn felle in swonyng,
 And sighede sore in compleynyng.
 Soore I compleynede that my sore
 On me gan greven more and more. 187c
 I hadde noon hope of allegeaunce;
 So nygh I drowe to desperaunce,
 I rought⁴ of dethe, ne of lyfe,
 Wheder that love wolde me dryfe.
 Yf me a martir wolde he make,
 I myght his power nought forsake.
 And while for anger thus I woke,⁵
 The god of Love an arowe toke;
 Ful sharpe it was and pugnaunt,
 And it was callid Faire-semblaunt, 188c

¹ Quit. ² There. ³ Shot. ⁴ Recked. ⁵ Became weak

The which in no wise wole consente,
 That ony lover hym repente,
 To serve his love with herte and alle,
 For ony perille that may bifalle.
 But though this arwe was kene grounde,
 As ony rasour that is founde,
 To kutte and kerven at the poynt,
 The God of Love it hadde anynt
 With a precious oynement,
 Somdelle to geve a-leggement ¹
 Upon the woundes that he hadde
 Thurgh the body in my herte made,
 To helpe her sores, and to cure,
 And that they may the bette endure.

1890

But yit this arwe, withoute more,
 Made in myn herte a large sore,
 That in fulle grete peyne I abode.
 But ay the oynement wente abroad ;
 Thourgh-oute my woundes large and wide,
 It spredde aboute in every side ;
 Thorough whos vertu and whos myght,
 Myn herte joyfulle was and light.
 I hadde ben deed and al to-shent ²
 But for the precious oynement.
 The shaft I drowe out of the arwe,
 Rokyng ³ for wo right wondir narwe ;
 But the heed, which made me smerte,
 Lette bihynde in myn herte
 With other foure, I dar wel saye,

1900

¹ Alleviation. ² Completely destroyed. ³ Quivering

That never wole be take awaye, 1910
 But the oynement halpe me wele.
 And yit sich sorwe dide I fele,
 That alle day I chaunged hewe,
 Of my woundes fresshe and newe,
 As men myghte se in my visage.

The arwis were so fulle of rage,
 So variaunt of diversitee,
 That men in everiche myghte se
 Bothe gret anoy and eke swetnesse,
 And joie y-meynt ¹ with bittirness. 1920
 Now were they esy, now were they wode,²
 In hem I felte bothe harme and goode.
 Now sore without aleggement,
 Now softenyng with oynement ;
 It softnede heere, and prikkith there,
 Thus ese and anger to-gidre were.

The god of Love delyverly ³
 Come lepande to me hastily,
 And seide to me in gret rape,<⁴
 " Yelde thee, for thou may not escape ! 1930
 May no defence availe thee heere ;
 Therfore I rede make no daungere.⁵
 If thou wolt yelde thee hastely,
 Thou shalt rather have mercy.
 He is a foole in sikernesse,
 That with daunger or stoutenesse
 Rebellith there that he shulde plese ;
 In sich folye is litel ese.

¹ Mingled. ² Mad. ³ With agility. ⁴ Haste. ⁵ Haughtiness.

Be meke, where thou must nedis bowe ;
 To stryve ageyn ¹ is nought thi prowē.² 1940
 Come at oones, and have y-doo,
 For I wole that it be soo.
 Thanne yelde thee heere debonairly.”

And I answeride ful hombly,
 “ Gladly, sir ; at youre bidding
 I wole me yelde in alle thyng.
 To youre servyse I wole me take ;
 For God defende that I shulde make
 Ageyn ¹ youre bidding resistance ;
 I wole not don so grete offence, 1950
 For if I dide, it were no skile.³
 Ye may do with me what ye wile,
 Save or spille, and also sloo ;⁴
 Fro you in no wise may I goo.
 My lyf, my deth, is in youre honde,
 I may not laste out of youre bonde.
 Pleyne ⁵ at youre lyst I yelde me,
 Hoppyng in herte that sumtyme ye
 Comfort and ese shulle me sende ;
 Or ellis shortly, this is the eende, 1960
 Withouten helthe I mote ay dure,
 But if ye take me to youre cure.

“ Comfort or helthe how shuld I have,
 Sith ye me hurt, but ye me save ?
 The helthe of love mote be founde,
 Where as they token firste her wounde.
 And if ye lyst of me to make

¹ Against. ² Profit. ³ Reast. ⁴ Slay. ⁵ Fully.

Your prisoner, I wole it take
 Of herte and wille fully at gree.¹
 Hoolly and pleyn I yelde me, 1970
 Withoute feynyng or feyntise,²
 To be governed by youre emprise.
 Of you I here so myche pris,
 I wole ben hool at youre devis
 For to fulfille youre lykyng,
 And to repente for no thyng,
 Hopyng to have yit in some tide
 Mercy, of that that I abide."

And with that covenaut yelde³ I me,
 Anoon down knelyng upon my kne, 1980
 Proferyng for to kisse his feete ;
 But for no thyng he wolde lete,
 And seide, "I love thee bothe and preise,
 Sen that thyn aunswar doth me ease,
 For thou answeride so curteisly.
 For now I wote wel uttirly,
 That thou art gentylle⁴ by thi speche.
 For though a man fer wolde seche,
 He shulde not fynden, in certeyn,
 No sich answer of no vileyn ;⁵ 1990
 For sich a word ne myghte nought
 Issue out of a vilayns thought.

"Thou shalt not lesen⁶ of thi speche,
 For thy helpyng wole I eche,⁷
 And eke encresen that I may.

¹ Favor. ² Deceit. ³ Yielded. ⁴ Well-born. ⁵ Base born
 person. ⁶ Lose. ⁷ Add to.

But first I wole that thou obaye,
 Fully for thyn avauntage,
 Anoon to do me heere homage.
 And sith kisse thou shalt my mouthe,
 Which to no vilayn was never couthe ¹ 2000
 For to aproche it, ne for to touche ;
 For sauff ² of cherlis I ne vouche ²
 That they shulle never neigh ³ it nere.
 For curteis, and of faire manere,
 Welle taught, and fulle of gentilnesse
 He muste ben, that shal me kysse,
 And also fulle of high fraunchise,⁴
 That shal atteyne to that emprise.

"And first of o thing warne I thee,
 That peyne and gret adversite 2010
 He mote endure, and eke travaile,
 That shal me serve, withoute faile.
 But ther ageyns thee to comferte,
 And with thi servise to desporte,
 Thou mayst fulle glad and joyfulle be
 So good a maister to have as me,
 And lord of so highe renoun.
 I bere of Love the gonfenoun,
 Of curtesie the banere ;
 For I am of the silf manere, 2020
 Gentil, curteys, meke and fre ;
 That who ever ententyf be
 Me to honoure, doute,⁵ and serve,
 And also that he hym observe

¹ Known. ² Vouchsafe. ³ Approach. ⁴ Generosity. ⁵ Dread.

Fro trespasse and fro vilanye,
 And hym governe in curtesie,
 With wille and with entencioun ;
 For whanne he first in my prisoun
 Is caught, thanne must he uttirly,
 Fro thense-forth fulle bisily 2030
 Caste hym gentylle for to bee,
 If he desire helpe of me."

Anoon withoute more delay,
 Withouten daunger or affray,¹
 I bicomе tho his man anoon,
 And gave hym thankes many a oon,
 And knelide doun with hondis joynt,
 And made it in my port fulle queynt ;
 The joye wente to myn herte rote.
 Whanne I hadde kissed his mouth so swote,
 I hadde sich myrthe and sich likyng, 2041
 It currede me of langwisshing.

He askide of me thanne hostages :
 "I have," he seide, "taken fele homages
 Of oon and other, where I have bene
 Disteyned ofte, withouten wene."²
 These felouns fulle of falsite
 Have many sithes biguyled me,
 And thorough her falshede her lust achieved,
 Wherof I repente and am agreved. 2050
 And I hem gete in my daungere,³
 Her falshede shulle they bie⁴ fulle dere.
 But for I love thee, I seie thee pleyn,

¹ Arrogance or fright. ² Doubt. ³ Dominion. ⁴ Suffer for

I wole of thee be more certeyn ;
 For thee so sore I wole now bynde,
 That thou away ne shalt not wynde,¹
 For to denyen the covenaut,
 Or don that is not avenaunt.²
 That thou were fals it were gret reuthe,
 Sith thou semest so fulle of treuthe." 2060
*Lamant.*³ "Sire, if thee lyst to undirstande,
 I merveile the askyng this demande.
 For why or wherfore shulde ye
 Ostages or borwis⁴ aske of me,
 Or ony other sikirnese,⁵
 Sithen ye wote in sothfastnesse
 That ye have me susprised so,
 And hole myn herte taken me fro,
 That it wole do for me no thing,
 But if it be at youre biddyng? 2070
 Myn herte is youres, and myn right nought
 As it bihoveth, in dede and thought,
 Redy in alle to worche youre wille,
 Whether so turne to good or ille.
 So sore it lustith you to plese,
 No man therof may you desese.⁶
 Ye have theron sette sich justice,
 That it is werreid⁷ in many wise.
 And if ye doute it nolde obeye,
 Ye may therof do make a keye, 2080
 And holde it with you for ostage."

¹ Turn. ² Becoming. ³ Lover ⁴ Pledges. ⁵ Security ⁶ Do
 alive. ⁷ Championed.

"Now certis this is noon outrage,"
 Quod Love, "and fully I acorde ;
 For of the body he is fulle lord,
 That hath the herte in his tresour ;
 Outrage it were to asken more."

Thanne of his awmener¹ he drough
 A litelle keye fetys² ynowgh,
 Which was of gold polissed clere
 And seide to me, "With this keye heere 2090
 Thyn herte to me now wole I shette ;
 For alle my jowelle loke and knette,³
 I bynde undir this litel keye,
 That no wight may carie awaye ;
 This keye is fulle of gret poeste."⁴
 With which anoon he touchide me,
 Undir the side fulle softly,
 That he myn herte sodeynly
 Without anoye hadde spered,
 That yit right nought it hath me dered.⁵ 2100

Whanne he hadde don his wille al oute,
 And I hadde putte hym out of doute,
 "Sire," I seide, "I have right gret wille,
 Youre lust and plesaunce to fulfille.
 Loke ye my servise take atte gree.⁶
 By thilke feith ye owe to me.
 I seye nought for recreaundise,⁷
 For I nought doute of⁸ youre servise ;
 But the servaunt traveileth in vayne,

¹ Almspurse. ² Trim. ³ Locked and bound. ⁴ Power (Ital. *potesta*). ⁵ Hurt. ⁶ Favor. ⁷ Fear. ⁸ I fear not in entering.

That for to serven doth his payne
Unto that lord which in no wise,
Kan hym no thank for his servyse."

Love seide, "Dismaie thee nought,
Syn thou for sokour hast me sought,
In thank thi servise wole I take,
And high of degre I wole thee make,
If wikkednesse ne hyndre thee ;
But (as I hope) it shal nought be.
'To worshipe no wight by aventure
May come, but if he peyne endure.' 2120
Abide and suffre thy distresse,
That hurtith now ; it shal be lesse.
I wote my silf what may thee save.
What medicyne thou woldist have.
And if thi trouthe to me thou kepe,
I shal unto thyn helpyng eke,
To cure thy woundes and make hem clene,
Where-so they be olde or grene ;
Thou shalt be holpen at wordis fewe.
For certeynly thou shalt welle shewe, 2130
Where that thou servest with good wille,
For to compleyssh¹ and fulfille
My comaundementis day and nyght,
Whiche I to lovers geve of right."

"A, sire, for Goddis love," seide I,
"Er ye passe hens, ententyfly
Youre comaundementis to me ye say,
And I shalle kepe hem if I may,

¹ Accomplish.

For hem to kepen is alle my thought.
 And if so be I wote hem nought, 2140
 Thanne may I unwityngly.
 Wherfore I pray you enterely,
 With alle myn herte, me to lere,¹
 That I trespasse in no manere."

The god of Love thanne chargide me
 Anoon, as ye shalle here and see,
 Worde by worde, by right emprise,
 So as the Romance shalle devise.

The maister lesith² his tyme to lere,
 Whanne that the disciple wole not here. 2150
 It is but veyn on hym to swynke,³
 That on his lernyng wole not thenke.
 Who-so luste Love, late hym entende,
 For now the Romance bigynneth to amende.
 Now is good to here in fay,
 If ony be that can it say,
 And poynte it as the resoun is
 Y-set ; for other gate,⁴ ywys,
 It shalle nought welle in alle thyng
 Be brought to good undirstondyng. 2160
 For a reder that poyntith ille
 A good sentence may ofte spille.
 The book is good at the eendyng,
 Y-maad of newe and lusty thyng ;
 For who-so wole the eendyng here,
 The crafte of love he shalle mowe lere,
 If that ye wole so long abide,

¹ Learn. (We now say teach.) ² Loseth. ³ Labor. ⁴ Wise.

Tyl I this Romance may unhide
 And undo the signifiante
 Of this dreame into Romance. 1170

The sothfastnesse that now is hidde
 Withoute coverture, shalle be kidde,¹
 Whanne I undon have this dremyng,
 Wherynne no word is of lesyng.

“Velayne, atte the bigynnyng,
 I wole,” sayde Love, “over alle thyng
 Thou leve, if thou ne wolt be
 Fals, and trespasse ageynes me.

I curse and blame generaly
 Alle hem that loven vilanye ; 2180

For vilanye makith vilayn,
 And by his dedis a cherle is seyn.
 Thise vilayns arn withouten pitee,
 Frendship, love, and alle bounte.²
 I nyl resseyve unto my servise
 Hem that ben vilayns of emprise.

“But undirstonde in thyn entent,
 That this not myn entendement,
 To clepe no wight in noo ages
 Oonly gentille for his lynages.³ 2190

But who-so is vertuous,
 And in his port nought outrageous,
 Whanne sich oon thou seest thee biforn,
 Though he be not gentille born,
 Thou maist welle seyn, this is in soth,
 That he is gentil, by-cause he doth

¹ Made known. ² Goodness. ³ Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 11, 164

As longeth to a gentilman ;
Of hem noon other deme I can.

“ For certeynly, withouten drede,
A cherle is demed by his dede, 2200
Of hie or lowe, as ye may see,
Or of what kynrede that he bee.
Ne say nought for noon yvel wille
Thyng that is for to holden stille ;
It is no worshipec to mysseye.¹

“ Thou maist ensample take of Keye,²
That was somtyme for mysseyng
Hated bothe of olde and yong.
As fer as Gaweyn the worthy
Was preised for his curtesie, 2210
Kay was hated, for he was felle,³
Of word dispitous and cruelle.

“ Wherefore be wise and aqueyntable,⁴
Goodly of word, and resonable
Bothe to lesse and eke to more.⁵
And whanne thou comest there men are,
Loke that thou have in custome ay
First to salue hym if thou may :
And if it falle, that of hem somme
Salue thee first, be not thou domme, 2220
But quyte hym curteisly anoon
Without abidyng, er they goon.

“ For no thyng eke thy tunge applye
To speke wordis of rebaudrye.

¹ It is so honor to defame. ² Sir Kay, of the Round Table
³ Felle. ⁴ Approachable. ⁵ Small and great.

To vilayne speche in no degre
 Late never thi lippe unbounden be.
 For I nought holde hym, in good feith,
 Curteys, that foule wordis seith.
 And alle wymmen serve and preise,
 And to thy power her honour reise. 2230

And if that ony myssaiere
 Dispise wymmen, that thou maist here,
 Blame hym, and bidde hym holde hym stille.
 And set thy myght and alle thy wille
 Wymmen and ladies for to please,
 And to do thyng that may hem ese,
 That they ever speke good of thee,
 For so thou maist best praised be.

“ Loke fro pride thou kepe thee wele ;
 For thou maist bothe perceyve and fele 2240
 That pride is bothe foly and synne ;
 And he that pride hath hym withynne,
 Ne may his herte in no wise
 Meken ne souplen¹ to servyse.
 For pride is founde, in every part,
 Contrarie unto Loves art.

“ And he that loveth trewely
 Shulde hym contene jolily,
 Withoute pride in sondry wise,
 And hym disgysen in queyntise. 2250
 For queynte array, withoute drede,
 Is no thyng proude, who takith hede ;
 For fresh array, as men may see,
 Withoute pride may ofte be.

¹ Make meek or pliable.

"Mayntene thy-silf aftir thi rent,¹
 Of robe and eke of garnement ;²
 For many sithe³ faire clothyng
 A man amendith in mych thyng.
 And loke alwey that they be shape, —
 What garnement that thou shalt make, — 2265
 Of hym that kan best do,
 With alle that perteyneth therto.
 Poyntis and sleeves be welle sittande,⁴
 Right and streghte on the hande.
 Of shone⁵ and bootes, newe and faire,
 Loke at the leest thou have a paire ;
 And that they sitte so fetisly,⁶
 That these ruyde⁷ may uttirly
 Merveyle, sith that they sitte so pleyn,
 How they come on or off ageyn. 2270

"Were streite gloves, with awmere⁸
 Of silk. And alwey with good chere
 Thou geve, if thou have richesse ;
 And if thou have nought, spende the lesse.
 Alwey be mery, if thou may,
 But waste not thi good alway.
 Have hatte of floures as fresh as May,
 Chapelett of roses of Wissonday ;⁹
 For sich array ne costneth but lite.

"Thyn hondis wasshe, thy teeth make white,¹⁰
 And lete no filthe upon thee bee. 2281

¹ Income. ² Garment. ³ A time. ⁴ Fitting. ⁵ Shoes. ⁶ Neatly
⁷ Rude ones. ⁸ Alms-bag. ⁹ Whitsunday, a feast-day. ¹⁰ Such
 instructions as these are common in mediæval books on manners
 Cf. *Manners and Meals in the Olden Time*, published by the
 Chaucer Society; and Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, i. 513.

Thy nailes blak, if thou maist see,
 Voide it away delyverly ;
 And kembe thyn heed right jolily.
 Farce ¹ not thi visage in no wise,
 For that of love is not themprise ;
 For love doth haten, as I fynde,
 A beaute that cometh not of Kynde.
 Alwey in herte I rede thee,
 Glad and mery for to be,
 And be as joyfulle as thou can ;
 Love hath no joye of sorowful man.
 That yvelle is fulle of curtesie,
 That knowith in his maladie ;
 For ever of love the sikenesse
 Is meynde ² with swete and bitternesse.

2290

“The sore of love is merveilous ;
 For now the lover is joyous,
 Now can he pleyne, now can he grone,
 Now can he syngen, now maken mone,
 To day he pleyneth for hevynesse,
 To morowe he pleyneth for jolynesse.
 The lyf of love is fulle contrarie,
 Which stounde-meie ³ can ofte varie.
 But if thou canst mirthis make,
 That men in gre ⁴ wole gladly take,
 Do it goodly, I comaunde thee ;
 For men shulde, where-so-ever they be,
 Do thinge that hem sittynge ⁵ is,

2300

¹ Paint (Fr. *fardeur*). ² Mixed ³ At intervals. ⁴ Favor. ⁵ Re-
 turning.

For therof cometh good loos¹ and pris. 2310
 Whereof that thou be vertuous,
 Ne be not straunge ne daungerous.²
 For if that thou good ridere be,
 Prike gladly that men may se.
 In armes also, if thou konne,
 Pursue to thou a name hast wonne.

“ And if thi voice be faire and clere,
 Thou shalt maken no grete daungere,³
 Whanne to synge they goodly preye,
 It is thi worship for tobeye. 2320
 Also to you it longith⁴ ay,
 To harp and gitterne, daunce and play,
 For if he can wel foote and daunce,
 It may hym greetly do avaunce.
 Among⁵ eke, for thy lady sake,
 Songes and complayntes that thou make ;
 For that wole meven⁶ in hir herte,
 Whanne they reden of thy smerte.

“ Loke that no man for scarce⁷ thee holde,
 For that may greve thee many-folde. 2330
 Resoun wole that a lover be
 In his giftes more large and fre,
 Than cherles that ben not of lovyng.
 For who therof can ony thyng,
 He shal be leef ay for to geve,
 In londes lore⁸ who-so wolde leve ;
 For he that thorgh a sodeyn sight,

¹ Laud. ² Distant nor haughty. ³ Coyness. ⁴ Be'ongeth
 At intervals. ⁵ Move. ⁶ Penurious. ⁸ The country's literature

Or for a kyssyng, anoon right
Gaff hoole his herte in wille and thought,
And to hym-silf kepeth right nought, 2340
Aftir this swiffte, it is good resoun,
He geve his good in a-boundoun.

“Now wole I shortly heere reherce,
Of that I have seid in verce,
Al thilke sentence by and by,¹
In wordis fewe compendiously,
That thou the better mayst on hem thenke,
Whether so it be thou wake or wynke ;
For that the wordis litel greve,
A man to kepe, whanne it is breve. 2350

“Who-so with Love wole goon or ride
He mote be curteis, and voide of pride,
Mery and fulle of jolite,
And of largesse a-losed² be.

“First I joyne³ thee heere in penaunce,
That evere, withoute repentaunce,
Thou sette thy thought in thy lovyng
To laste withoute repentyng ;
And thenke upon thi myrthis swete,
That shalle folowe aftir whan ye mete. 2360

“And for thou trewe to love shalt be,
I wole and comaunde thee,
That in oo place thou sette, alle hoole,
Thyn herte, withoute halfen-doole,⁴
Fro trecherie and sikernesse ;

¹ In order, word by word. ² Praised (Fr. *louer*, Lat. *laudare*).
Enjo'n. ⁴ Wavering (literally half interest ; O. E. *dæl*, part).

For I lovede nevere doublesse.
 To many his herte that wole departe,¹
 Everiche shal have but litel parte.
 But of hym drede I me right nought,
 That in oo place settith his thought. 2370
 Therfore in oo place it sitte,
 And lat it nevere thannys flitte.
 For if thou gevest it in lenyng,²
 I holde it but a wrecchid thyng.
 Therfore geve it hoole and quyte,
 And thou shalt have the more merite.
 If it be lent than aftir soone,
 The bounte³ and the thanke is doone,
 But, in love, fre geven thing
 Requyreth a gret guerdonyng. 2380
 Geve it in gift al quyte fully,
 And make thi gift debonairly;
 For men that gift holde more dere
 That geven is with gladsome chere.
 That gift nought to preisen is
 That man geveth maugre his.⁴

"Whanne thou hast geven thyn herte, as I
 Have seid thee heere openly,
 'Thanne adventures shulle thee falle,
 Which harde and hevy ben with-alle. 2390
 For ofte whan thou bithenkist thee
 Of thy lovyng, where-so thou be,
 Fro folk thou must departe in hie,⁵

Divide. ¹ Lending. ² Goodness. ³ In spite of himself.
 clasic.

That noon perceyve thi maladie,
 But hyde thyne harme thou must alone,
 And go forth sole, and make thy mone.
 Thou shalt no whyle be in o state,
 But whylom colde and whylom hate ;¹
 Nowe reed as rose, now yelowē and fade ;²
 Such sorowe I trowe thou never hade. 2400

“ Cotidien, ne quarteyne,³
 It is nat so ful of peyne.
 For often tymes it shal falle
 In love, amonge thy paynes alle,
 That thou thy selfe al holy
 Forgeten shalt so utterly,
 That many tymes thou shalt be
 Styl as an ymage of tree,
 Dome as a stoon, without steryng
 Of fote or hande, wythoute spekyng. 2410
 Than sone after alle thy payne,
 To memorye shalt thou come agayne,
 As man abashed wonder sore,
 And after syghen more and more.
 For wytte thou wele, withouten wene,⁴
 In such estate ful ofte have bene
 That have the yvel of love assayde,
 Wherthrough thou art so dismayde.

“ After, a thought shal take the so,
 That thy love is to ferre the fro : 2420
 Thou shalt saye, ‘ God ! what maye thys be,

Hot. ² Dull. ³ A fever returning every day or every fourth
 day ⁴ Doubt

That I ne may my lady se ?
 Myne hert alone is to her go,
 And I abyde al sole in wo,
 Departed from myn owne thought,
 And with myne eyen se ryght nought.
 Alas, myne eyen sene I ne may,
 My careful herte to convay !
 Myne hertes gyde, but they be,
 I prayse nothyng what ever they se. 2430
 Shule they abyde thanne ? Nay ;
 But gonne and visite withoute delay
 That myne herte desyreth so.
 For certaynly, but yf they go,
 A foole my selfe I may wel holde,
 Whan I ne se what myne herte wolde.
 Wherefore I wol gone her to sene,
 Or eased shal I never bene,
 But I have som tokenyng.'
 " Then gost thou forth withoute dwelling,
 But oft thou faylest of thy desyre, 2440
 Er thou mayst come her any nere,
 And wastest in vayn thi passage.
 Thanne fallest thou in a newe rage ;
 For want of sight thou gynnest morne,
 And homewarde pensyf thou dost retorne.
 In gret myscheef thanne shalt thou bee,
 For thanne agayne shalle come to thee
 Sighes and pleyntes with newe woo,
 That no ycchyng prikketh soo. 2450
 Who wote it nought, he may go lere,

Of hem that bien¹ love so dere.
 No thyng thyn herte appesen may,
 That ofte thou wolt goon and assay,
 If thou maist seen by aventure
 Thi lyves joy, thine hertis cure,
 So that bi grace, if thou myght
 Atteyne of hire to have a sight.

“Thanne shalt thou done noon other dede,
 But with that sight thyne eyen fede. 2460
 That faire freshe whanne thou maist see,
 Thyne herte shalle so ravysshed be,
 That nevere thou woldest, thi thankis,² lete
 Ne remove, for to see that swete.
 The more thou seest, in sothfastnesse,
 The more thou coveytest of that swetnesse,
 The more thine herte brenneth in fier,
 The more thine herte is in desire.
 For who considreth every deelle,
 It may be likned wondir welle, 2470
 The peyne of love unto a fere;³
 For evermore thou neighst nere
 In thought, or howso that it bee,
 For verray sothe I telle it thee,
 The hatter⁴ evere shalle thou brenne,
 As experience shalle thee kenne.⁵
 Where so comest in ony coost,
 Who is next fuyre he brenneth moost.
 And yitt forsothe for alle thine hete,
 Though thou for love swelte and swete, 2480

¹ Suffer for. ² Willingly. ³ Fire ⁴ Hotter. ⁵ Teach

Ne for no thyng thou felen may,
Thou shalt not willen to passen away.

“And though thou go, yitt must thee, nede,¹
Thenke alle day on hir fairhede,
Whom thou biheelde with so good wille;
And holde thi-silf biguyled ille,
That thou ne haddest noon hardement,
To shewe hir ought of thyne entent.
Thyn herte fulle sore thou wolt dispise,
And eke repreve of cowardise, 249^a
That thou, so dulle in every thing,
Were domme for drede, withoute spekyng.
Thou shalt eke thenke thou didest folye,
That thou were hir so faste bye,
And durst not auntre² thee to saye
Som thyng er thou cam away;
For thou haddist nomore wonne³
To speke of hir whanne thou bigonne:
But yitt she wolde for thy sake
In armes goodly thee have take, 250^a
It shulde have be more worth to thee,
Than of tresour gret plente.

“Thus shalt thou morne and eke compleyne,
And gete enchesoun⁴ to goone ageyne,
Unto thy walke, or to thi place,
Where thou biheelde her fleshly face.
And never for fals suspeccioun
Thou woldest fynde occasioun
For to gone unto hire hous.

¹ Necessarily. ² Adventure. ³ Went. ⁴ Occasion

So art thou thanne desirous, 2510
 A sight of hire for to have,
 If thou thine honour myghtist save,
 Or ony erande myghtist make
 Thider, for thi loves sake,
 Fulle fayn thou woldist, but for drede
 'Thou gost not, lest that men take hede.
 Wherfore I rede ¹ in thi goyng,
 And also in thyne ageyn-comyng,
 Thou be welles ware that men ne wite ;²
 Feyne thee other cause than itte, 2520
 To go that weye, or faste bye, —
 'To hele ³ wel is no folye.'

"And if so be it happe thee,
 That thou thi love there maist see,
 In siker wise thou hir salewe,
 Wherewith thy colour wole transmewe,
 And eke thy blode shal al to quake,
 Thyne hewe eke chaungen for hir sake.
 But word and witte, with chere fulle pale,
 Shulle wante for to telle thy tale. 2530
 And if thou maist so fer forth wyne,
 That thou to resoun derst bigynne,
 And woldist seyn thre thingis or mo,
 Thou shalt fulle scarsly seyn the two.
 Though thou bithenke thee never so welle,
 'Thou shalt forgete yit somdelle,
 But if thou dele with trecherie.
 For false lovers mowe alle folye

¹ Counsel. Know. ³ Conceal

Seyn what hem lust withouten drede,
 They be so double in her falshede ; 254c
 For they in herte cunne thenke a thyng
 And seyn another, in her spekyng.

“ And whanne thi speche is eendid alle,
 Ryght thus to thee it shalle byfalle ;
 If ony word thanne come to mynde,
 That thou to seye hast left bihynde,
 Thanne thou shalt brenne in gret martire ;
 For thou shalt brenne as ony fiere,
 This is the stryf and eke the affray,
 And the batelle that lastith ay. 255o
 This bargeyn eende may never take,
 But if that she thi pees wille make.

“ And whanne the nyght is comen, anoon
 A thosande angres shalle come uppon.
 To bedde as fast thou wolt thee dighte,
 Where thou shalt have but smal delite ;
 For whanne thou wenest for to slepe,
 So fulle of peyne shalt thou crepe,
 Sterte in thi bedde aboute fulle wide,
 And turne fulle ofte on every side ; 256o
 Now downward groff, and now upright,
 And walowe in woo the longe nyght,
 Thine armys shalt thou sprede abroad,
 As man in werre were forweriede.

“ Thanne shalle thee come a remembraunce
 Of hir shappe and hir semblaunce,
 Whereto none other may be pere.
 And wite thou wel withoute were,

That thee shal seme somtyme that nyght,
 That thou hast hir that is so bright, 2570
 Naked bitwene thyne armes there,
 Alle sothfastnesse as though it were.

“Thou shalt make castels thanne in Spayne,
 And dreme of joye, alle but in vayne,
 And thee deliten of right nought,
 While thou so slomrest in that thought,
 That is so swete and delitable,
 The which in sothe nys but fable,
 For it ne shalle no while laste.
 Thanne shalt thou sighe and wepe faste, 2580
 And say, ‘Dere God, what thing is this?
 My dreme is turned alle amys,
 Which was fulle swete and apparent,¹
 But now I wake it is al shent!
 Now gedde this mery thought away.
 Twenty tymes upon a day
 I wolde this thought wolde come ageyne,
 For it aleggith² welle my peyne.
 It makith me fulle of joyfulle thought,
 It sleth me that it lastith noght. 2590

“‘A, Lord! why nyl ye me socoure?
 The joye I trowe that I langoure,
 The deth I wolde me shulde sloo,³
 While I lye in hir armes twoo.
 Myne harme is harde withouten wene,⁴
 My gret unease fulle ofte I meene.
 But wolde Love do so I myghte

¹ Evident. ² Alleviateth. ³ Slay. ⁴ Doubt

Have fully joye of hir so brighte,
My peyne were quytte me rychely.

“ ‘Allas, to grete a thing aske I !
Hit is but foly, and wrong wenyng,
To aske so outrageous a thyng.

2609

And who so askith folily,
He mote be warned hastily ;
And I ne wote what I may saye,
I am so fer out of the waye ;

For I wolde have fulle gret likyng,
And fulle gret joye of lasse thing,
For wolde she of hir gentylnesse,
Withoute more, me oonys kysse,

2610

It were to me a grete guerdoun,
Relees¹ of alle my passioun.

But it is harde to come therto ;

Alle is but folye, that I do,

So high I have myne herte sette,
Where I may no comfort gette.

I wote not where² I seye welle or nought ;

But this I wote wel in my thought,

That it were better of hir alloone,

For to stynte my woo and moone,

2620

A loke on hir i-caste goodly,

Than for to have al utterly

Of an other alle hoole the pley.

A, Lord, where I shalle byde the day

That evere she shalle my lady be ?

He is fulle cured, that may hir see.

¹ Relief. ² Whether.

A, God ! whanne shal the dawnyng springe ?
 To ligger¹ thus is an angry thyng ;
 I have no joye thus heere to lye,
 Whanne that my love is not me bye. 2630

“ A man to lyen hath gret disease,
 Which may not slepe ne reste in ese.
 I wolde it dawed, and were now day,
 And that the nyght were went away,
 For were it day, I wolde uprise.
 A ! slowe sonne, shewe thine enprise !
 Spede thee to sprede thy beemys brighte,
 And chace the derknesse of the nyghte,
 To putte away the stoundes² stronge,
 Whiche in me lasten alle to longe.’ 2640

“ The nyght shalt thou contene³ soo,
 Withoute rest, in peyne and woo ;
 If evere thou knewe of love distresse,
 Thou shalt mowe⁴ lerne in that siknesse.
 And thus enduryng shalt thou lye
 And ryse on morwe up erly,
 Out of thy bedde, and harneyse thee
 Er evere dawnyng thou maist see.
 Alle pryvyly thanne shalt thou goon,
 What whider it be, thy silf alloon, 2650
 For reyne, or hayle, for snowe, for slete,
 Thider she dweliith that is so swete,
 The which may falle a-slepe be,
 And thenkith but lytel upon thee.

“ Thanne shalt thou goon, ful foule a-feerd,

¹ Lie. ² Moments. ³ Continue. ⁴ More.

Loke if the gate be unspered,¹
 And waite without in woo and peyne,
 Fulle yvel a-coolde in wynde and reyne.
 Thanne shalt thou go the dore bifore,
 If thou maist fynden ony score,² 2660
 Or hoole, or reeft, what evere it were ;
 Thanne shalt thou stoupe, and lay to ere,
 If they withynne a slepe be ;
 I mene alle save the lady free.
 Whom wakyng if thou maist asprie,
 Go putte thi silf in jupartie,
 To aske grace, and thee bimene,³
 That she may wite, withoute wene,⁴
 That thou al nyght no rest hast hadde,
 So sore for hir thou were bystadde.⁵ 2670

“ Wommen wel oughte pite to take
 Of hem that sorwen for her sake.
 And loke, for love of that relyke,⁶
 That thou thenke noon other lyke.
 For whanne thou hast so gret annoy,
 Shalle kysse thee er thou go away,
 And holde that in fulle gret deynte.
 And for that no man shal thee see
 Bifore the hous, ne in the way,
 Loke thou be goone ageyn er day. 2680

“ Such comyng, and such goyng,
 Such hevynesse, and such walkyng,
 Makith lovers, withouten ony wene,⁴

¹ Unbolted. ² Cleft. ³ Bemoan. ⁴ Doubt. ⁵ Placed in peril.
 Precious thing.

Under her clothes pale and lene,
For Love leveth colour ne cleernesse ;
Who loveth trewe hath no fatnesse.

Thou shalt wel by thy silfe see
That thou must nedis assaid be.

For men that shape hem other weye

Falsly her ladyes for to bitraye, 2690

It is no wonder though they be fatte ;

With false othes her loves they gatte ;

For ofte I see suche losengours ¹

Fatter than abbatis or priours !

“ Yit with o thing I charge thee,

That is to seye, that thou large ² be

Unto the mayde, that hir doith serve,

So best hir thanke thou shalt deserve

Geve hir giftes, and gete hir grace,

For so thou may thanke purchase, 2700

That she thee worthy holde and free.

“ Thi lady, and alle that may thee see,

Also hir servauntes worshipe ay,

And please as mychel as thou may ;

Grete good thorgh hem may come to thee,

Bi-cause with hir they ben pryve.

They shal hir telle hou they thee fande

Curteis and wys, and welle doande, ³

And she shalle preise welle thee more.

Loke oute of londe thou be not fore ; ⁴ 2710

And if such cause thou have, that thee

¹ Liars. ² Liberal. This suggestion is from the *Ars Amatoria*,
ii. 251. ³ Doing. ⁴ Gone.

Bihoveth to gone out of contree,
 Leve hoole thin herte in hostage,
 Tille thou ageyn make thi passage.
 Thenke longe to see the swete thyng
 That hath thine herte in hir kepyng.

“ Now have I tolde thee in what wise
 A love-re shalle do me servise.
 Do it thanne, if thou wolt have
 The meede that thou aftir crave.” 2720

Whanne Love alle this hadde boden¹ me,
 I seide hym, “ Sire, how may it be
 That lovers may in such manere
 Endure the peyne ye have seid heere?
 I merveyle me wonder faste,
 How ony man may lyve or laste
 In suche peyne and suche brennyng,
 In sorwe and thought, and such sighing,
 Aye unrelesed² woo to make,
 Whether so it be they slepe or wake. 2730
 In such annoy contynuely,
 As helpe me God this mervei'e I,
 How man, but he were maad of stele,
 Myghte lyve a monthe, such peynes to fele.”

The god of Love thanne seide me,
 “ Freend, by the feith I owe to thee,
 May no man have good, but he it bye.³
 A man loveth more tendirly
 The thyng that he hath bought most dere,
 For wite thou welle, withouten were,⁴ 2740

¹ Bidden. ² Unrelaxed. ³ Suffer for. ⁴ Doubt

In thanke that thyng is taken more,
 For which a man hath suffred sore.
 Certis no wo ne may atteyne
 Unto the sore of loves peyne.
 Noon yvel ther-to ne may amounte,
 No more than a man may counte
 The dropes that of the water be.
 For drye as wellle the greete see
 Thou myghtist, as the harmes telle
 Of hem that with Love dwelle 2750
 In servyse ; for peyne hem sleeth,
 And that ech man wolde fle the deeth,
 And trowe thei shulde nevere escape,
 Nere¹ that Hope couthe hem make
 Glad as man in prisoun sette,
 And may not geten for to ete
 But barly breed, and watir pure,
 And lyeth in vermyn and in ordure ;
 With alle this yitt can he lyve,
 Good hope such comfort hath hym geve, 2760
 Which maketh wene² that he shalle be
 Delyvered and come to liberte ;
 In fortune is his fulle trist.
 Though he lye in strawe or dust,
 In Hoope is alle his susteynyng.
 And so for lovers in her wenyng,³
 Whiche love hath shitte⁴ in his prisoun ;
 Good-hope is her salvacioun.
 Good-hope, how sore that they smerte,

¹ Were it so. ² Think. ³ Their wening. ⁴ Shut.

Geveth hem bothe wille and herte 277c
 To profre her body to martire ;
 For Hope so sore doith hem desire
 To suffre ech harme that men devise,
 For joye that aftirward shalle aryse.

“ Hope in desire cacche victorie ;
 In hope of love is alle the glorie,
 For Hope is alle that love may geve ;
 Nere Hope, ther shulde no lover lyve.
 Blessid be Hope, which with desire
 Avaunceth lovers in such manere. 278c
 Good-hope is curteis for to please,
 To kepe lovers from alle disese.¹
 Hope kepith his londe, and wole abide,
 For ony perille that may be-tyde ;
 For Hope to lovers, as most cheef,
 Doth hem endure alle myscheef ;
 Hope is her helpe whanne myster ² is.
 And I shalle geve thee eke, iwys,
 Three other thingis, that gret solas
 Doith to hem that be in my las.³ 279c

“ The firste good that may be founde,
 To hem that in my lace be bounde,
 Is Swete-thought, for to recorde
 Thing wherwith thou canst accorde
 Best in thyne herte ; where she be,
 Thenkyng in absence is good to thee.
 Whanne ony lover doth compleyne,
 And lyveth in distresse and in peyne,

¹ Discomfort. ² Need. ³ Snare.

Thanne Swete-thought shal come as blyve,
Awey his angre for to dryve. 2800

It makith lovers remembraunce
Of comfort, and of high plesaunce,
That Hope hath hight hym for to wynne.
For Thought anoon thanne shalle bygynne,
As ferre, God wote, as he can fynde,
To make a mirrour of his mynde,
For to biholde he wole not lette.
Hir persone he shalle a-fore hym sette,
Hir laughing eyen, persaunt and clere,
Hir shappe, hir fourme, hir goodly chere, 2810
Hir mouth that is so gracious,
So swete, and eke so saverous,
Of alle hir fetures he shalle take heede,
His eyen with alle hir lymes fede.

"Thus Swete-thenkyng shalle aswage
The peyne of lovers, and her rage.
Thi joye shalle double, withoute gesse,
Whanne thou thenkist on hir semlynesse,
Or of hir laughing, or of hir chere,
That to thee made thi lady dere. 2820
This comfort wole I that thou take,
And if the nexte thou wolt forsake
Which is not lesse saverous,
Thou shuldist not ben to daungerous.

"The secounde shal be Swete-speche,
That bath to many oon be leche,¹
To bringe hem out of woo and were.²

¹ Been physician. ² Confusion.

And helpe many a bachilere,
 And many a lady sent socoure,
 That have loved paramour,¹ 283c
 Thorgh spekyng, whanne they myghten heere
 Of her lovers to hem so dere.
 To me it voidith alle her smerte,
 The which is closed in her herte.
 In herte it makith hem glad and light,
 Speche, whanne they mowe have sight.

“ And therefore now it cometh to mynde,
 In olde dawes² as I fynde,
 That clerkis writen that hir knewe,
 Ther was a lady fresh of hewe, 284c
 Which of hir love made a songe
 On hym, for to remembre amonge,
 In which she seide, ‘ *Whanne that I here
 Speken of hym that is so dere
 To me it voidith alle smerte,
 Iwys he sittith so nere myne herte.
 To speke of hym at eve or morwe,
 It cureth me of alle my sorwe.
 To me is noon so high plesaunce
 As of his persone dalyaunce.*’ 285c

“ She wiste fulle welle that Swete-spekyng
 Comfortith in fulle myche thyng.
 Hir love she hadde fulle welle assaid,
 Of nem she was fulle welle apaied ;
 To speke of hym hir joye was sette.
 Therefore I rede³ thee that thou gette

¹ *Par amour*, by love. ² Days. ³ Advise.

A felowe that can welle concele,
 And kepe thi counselle, and welle hele,¹
 To whom go shewe hoolly thine herte,
 Bothe welle and woo, joye and smerte : 2860
 To gete comfort to hym thou goo,
 And pryvyly bitwene yow twoo,
 Yee shalle speke of that goodly thyng,
 That hath thyne herte in hir kepyng ;
 Of hir Beaute and hir semblaunce,
 And of hir goodly countenaunce ;
 Of alle thi state, thou shalt hym seye,
 And aske hym counseille how thou may
 Do ony thyng that may hir plesse,
 For it to thee shalle do grete ese, 2870
 That he may wite ² thou trust hym soo,
 Bothe of thi wele and of thi woo.

“ And if his herte to love be sett,
 His companye is myche the bett,
 For resoun wole he shewe to thee
 Alle uttirly his pryvyte,
 And what she is he loveth so
 To thee pleynly he shal undo,
 Withoute drede of ony shame,
 Bothe telle hir renoun and hir name. 2880
 Thanne shalle he forther ferre and nere,
 And namely to thi lady dere,
 In syker wise, yee, every other
 Shalle helpen as his owne brother,
 In trouthe withoute doublesesse,

¹ Hide. ² Know.

And kepen cloos in sikernesse.
 For it is noble thing in faye,
 To have a man thou darst saye
 Thy pryve counselle every deelle,
 For that wole comforte thee right welle, 2890
 And thou shalt holde thee welle apayed,
 Whanne such a freend thou hast assayed.

“The thridde good of gret comforte
 That geveth to lovers most disporte
 Comyth of sight and of biholdyng,
 That clepid is Swete-lokyng,
 The whiche may noon ese do,
 Whanne thou art fer thy lady fro ;
 Wherefore thou prese¹ alwey to be
 In place where thou maist hir see. 2900
 For it is thyng most ameraus,
 Most delytable and faverous
 For to a-swage a mannes sorowe,
 To sene his lady by the morwe.
 For it is a fulle noble thing
 Whanne thyne eyen have metyng
 With that relike precious,
 Whereof they be so desirous.

“But al day after, soth it is,
 They have no drede to faren amysse, 2910
 Trey dreden neither wynde ne reyne,
 Ne noon other maner peyne.
 For whanne thyne eyen were thus in blisse,
 Yit of hir curtesie, ywysse,

¹ Press.

Alloone they can not have her joye,
But to the herte they conveye
Parte of her blisse ; to hym thou sende,
Of alle this harme to make an ende.

"The eye is a good messangere,
Which can to the herte in such manere 2920
Tidyngis sende, that he hath sene
To voide hym of his peynes clene.
Wherof the herte rejoiseth soo
That a gret partye of his woo
Is voided, putte away to flight.
Right as the derknesse of the nyght
Is chased with clerenesse of the mone,
Right so is al his woo fulle soone
Devoided clene, whanne that the sight
Biholden may that freshe wight 2930
That the herte desireth soo,
That al his derknesse is a-goo ;
For thanne the herte is alle at ese,
Whanne they sene that may hem plese.

"Now have I declared thee alle oute
Of that thou were in drede and doute ;
For I have tolde thee feithfully,
What thee may curen utterly,
And alle lovers that wole be
Feithfulle, and fulle of stabilite. 2940
Good-hope alwey kepe bi thi side,
And Swete-thought make eke abide,
Swete-lokyng and Swete-speche,
Of alle thyne harmes thei shalle be leche.

Of every thou shalt have gret plesaunce,
 If thou canst bide in suffraunce,
 And serve wel withoute feyntise,¹
 Thou shalt be quyte of thyne emprise,
 With more guerdoun, if that thou lyve ;
 But alle this tyme this I thee geve.” 295c

The god of Love, whanne al the day
 Hadde taught me, as ye have herd say,
 And enfourmed compendiously,
 He vanyshide away alle sodeynly,
 And I alloone lefte alle soole,
 So fulle of compleynt and of doole,²
 For I sawe no man there me by.
 My woundes me grevede wondirly ;
 Me for to curen no thyng I knewe,
 Save the bothom³ bright of hewe, 296c
 Wheron was sett hoolly my thought ;
 Of other comfort knewe I nought.
 But it were thorgh the god of Love,
 I knew not elles to my bihove
 That myghte me ease or comfort gete,
 But if he wolde hym entermete.⁴

The roser was, withoute doute,
 Y-closed with an hegge withoute,
 As ye toforn have herd me seyne ;
 As fast I bisiede, and wolde fayne 297c
 Have passed the hay, if I myghte
 Have geten ynne by ony slighte
 Unto the bothom so faire to see.

¹ Feigning. ² Mourning (Fr. *deuil*). ³ Bud. Mediate.

But evere I dradde blamed to be,
 If men wolde have suspeccioun
 That I wolde of entencioun
 Have stole the roses that there were ;
 Therfore to entre I was in fere.

But at the last, as I bithoughte
 Whether I shulde passe or noughte, 298a
 I sawe come with a glade chere
 To me, a lusty bachelere,
 Of good stature, and of good highte,
 And Bialacoil¹ forsothe he highte.
 Sone he was unto Curtesie,
 And he me grauntide fulle gladly
 The passage of the outter haye,²
 And seide, " Sir, how that yee maye
 Passe, if youre wille be,
 The freshe roser for to see, 299a
 And yee the swete savour fele.
 Youre warrans may I be right wele,
 So thou thee kepe fro folye,
 Shalle no man do thee vylanye.
 If I may helpe you in ought,
 I shalle not feyne, dredeth nought ;
 For I am bounde to youre servise,
 Fully devoide of feyntise."

Thanne unto Bialacoil saide I,
 " I thanke you, sir, ful hertely 300a
 And youre biheeste take at gre,³
 That ye so goodly profer me ;

¹ Good-address. ² Hedge. ³ Favor

To you it cometh of gret fraunchise,¹
 That ye me profer youre servise."
 Thanne aftir fully delyverly,
 Thorough the breres anoon wente I,
 Wherof encombred was the haye.
 I was wel plesed, the soth to saye,
 To se the bothom faire and swote,
 So freshe sprange out of the rote.

3010

And Bialacoil ine servede welle,
 Whanne I so nygh me myghte fele
 Of the bothom the swete odour,
 And so lusty hewed of colour.
 But thanne a cherle — foule hym bityde! —
 Biside the roses gan hym hyde,
 To kepe the roses of that roser,
 Of whom the name was Daunger.
 This cherle was hid there in the greves,²
 Kovered with gras and with leves,
 To spie and take whom that he fonde
 Unto that roser putte an honde.

3020

He was not soole, for ther was moo ;
 For with hym were other twoo
 Of wikkid maners, and yvel fame.
 That oon was clepid by his name,
 Wykked-tonge, God geve hym sorwe!
 For neither at eve ne at morwe,
 He can of no man goode speke ;
 On many a just man doth he wreke.
 Ther was a womman eke, that highte

3030

¹ Generosity. ² Groves.

Shame, that, who can reken righte,
 Trespace was hir fadir name,
 Hir moder Resoun ; and thus was Shame
 Brought of these ilke twoo.

And yitt hadde Trespasse never adoo
 With Resoun, ne never ley hir bye,
 He was so hidous and so oughlye,
 I mene this that Trespas highte ;
 But Resoun conceyveth, of a sighte, 3040
 Shame, of that I spake aforne.

And whanne that Shame was thus borne,
 It was ordeyned that Chastite
 Shulde of the roser lady be,
 Which, of the bothoms more and lasse,
 With sondre folk assailed was,
 That she ne wiste what to doo.
 For Venus hir assailith soo,
 That nyght and day from hir she stale
 Bothoms and roses over alle. 3050

To Resoun thanne praieth Chastite,
 Whom Venus hath flemed¹ over the see,
 That she hir doughter wolde hir lene,²
 To kepe the roser fresh and grene.

Anoon Resoun to Chastite
 Is fully assented that it be,
 And grauntide hir, at hir request,
 That Shame, by-cause she is honest,
 Shalle keper of the roser be.

And thus to kepe it ther were three, 3060

¹ Banished. Lend.

That noon shulde hardy be ne bolde,
 Were he yong or were he olde,
 Ageyn hir wille away to bere
 Bothoms ne roses, that there were.

I hadde wel spedde, hadde I not bene
 Awayted¹ with these three, and sene.
 For Bialacoil, that was so faire,
 So gracious and so debonaire,
 Quytt hym to me fulle curteislye,
 And me to please bade that I
 Shulde drawe me to the bothom nere ;
 Prese in to touche the rosere
 Which bare the roses, he gaf me leve ;
 This graunte ne myghte but lytel greve.
 And for he sawe it likede me,
 Ryght nygh the bothom pullede he
 A leef alle grene, and gaff me that,
 The whiche fulle nygh the bothom sat ;
 I made of that leefe fulle queynte.²

3070

And whanne I felte I was aqueynte
 With Bialacoil, and so pryve,
 I wende alle at my wille hadde be,
 Thanne waxe I hardy for to telle
 To Bialacoil hou me bifelle,
 Of Love, that toke and wounded me ;
 And seide, " Sir, so mote I thee,³
 I may no joye have in no wise,
 Uppon no side, but it rise ;
 For sithe — if I shalle not feyne —

3080

¹ Watched. ² Strange. ³ Thrive.

In herte I have hadde so gret peyne,
 So gret annoy, and such affray,¹
 That I ne wote what I shalle say;
 I drede youre wrath to disserve.
 Lever me were, that knyves kerve
 My body shulde in pecys smalle,
 Than in any wise it shulde falle,
 That ye wratthed shulde ben with me."
 "Sey boldely thi wille," quod he,
 "I nyl be wroth, if that I may,
 For nought that thou shalt to me say." 3100

Thanne seide I, "Sir, not you displease,
 To knowen of myn gret unnese.
 In which oonly love hath me brought;
 For peynes gret, disese and thought,
 Fro day to day he doth me drye;²
 Supposeth not, sir, that I lye.
 In me fyve woundes dide he make,
 The soore of whiche shalle nevere slake,
 But ye the bothom graunte me,
 Which is moost passaunt of beaute, 3110
 My lyf, my deth, and my martire,
 And tresour that I moost desire."

Thanne Bialacoil, affrayed alle,
 Seyde, "Sir, it may not falle;
 That ye desire it may not arise.
 What! wolde ye shende³ me in this wise?
 A mochel foole thanne I were,
 If I suffride you away to bere

¹ Fright. ² Causeth me to suffer. ³ Discomfit

'The freshe bothom, so faire of sight.
 For it were neither skile¹ ne right, 3120
 Of the roser ye broke the rynde,
 Or take the rose afor his kynde ;
 Ye are not curteys to asken it.
 Late it stille on the roser sitte,
 And late it growe til it amended be,
 And perfytylly come to beaute.
 I nolde not that it pulled were,
 Fro thilke roser that it bere,
 To me it is so leef and deere."

With that sterte oute anoon Daungere, 3130
 Out of the place where he was hidde.
 His malice in his chere was kidde ;²
 Fulle grete he was and blak of hewe,
 Sturdy, and hidous, who-so hym knewe,
 Like sharp urchouns³ his here was growe,
 His eyes rede sparkling as the fire glowe,
 His nose frounced, fulle kirked⁴ stoode,
 He come criande as he were woode,
 And seide, " Bialacoil, telle me why
 Thou bryngest hider so booldely 3140
 Hym that so nygh cam the roser ?
 Thou worchist in a wrong maner ;
 He thenkith to dishonoure thee,
 Thou art wel worthy to have maugree,⁵
 To late hym of the roser wite ;
 Who serveth a feloun is yvel quitte.

¹ Reason. ² Exhibited. ³ Hedgehogs. ⁴ Wrinkled, full crooked
 ill favor

Thou woldist have doon gret bounte,¹
And he with shame wolde quyte thee.

" Fle hennes, felowe ! I rede² thee goo !
It wanteth litel I wole thee sloo ; 3150
For Bialacoil ne knewe thee nought,
Whanne thee to serve he sette his thought ;
For thou wolt shame hym if thou myght,
Bothe ageynes resoun and right.
I wole no more in thee affye,³
That comest so slyghly for tespye ;
For it preveth wonder welle,
Thy slight and tresoun every deelle."

I durste no more there make abode,
For thilke cherl he was so wode ; 3160
So gan he threte and manace,
And thurgh the haye he dide me chace.
For feer of hym I tremblyde and quoke,
So cherlishly his heed it shoke ;
And seide, if eft he myghte me take,
I shulde not from his hondis scape.

Thanne Bialacoil is fledde and mate,⁴
And I, alle soole disconsolate,
Was left aloone in peyne and thought ;
For shame to deth I was nygh brought. 3170
Thanne thought I on myn highe foly,
How that my body, utterly,
Was geve to peyne and to martire ;
And therto hadde I so gret ire,
That I ne durste the hayes⁵ passe ;

¹ Goodness. ² Counsel. ³ Confide. ⁴ Dejected ⁵ Hedges

There was noon hope, there was no grace.
 I trowe nevere man wiste of peyne,
 But he were laced in Loves cheyne ;
 Ne no man wiste, and sooth it is,
 But if he love, what anger is. 3180

Love holdith his heest¹ to me right wele,
 Whanne peyne he seide I shulde fele.
 Noon herte may thenke, ne tunge seyne,
 A quarter of my woo and peyne.
 I myghte not with the anger laste ;
 Myn herte in poynt was for to braste,
 Whanne I thought on the rose, that soo
 That was thurgh Daunger cast me froo.

A longe while stode I in that state,
 Til that me saugh so madde and mate 3190
 The lady of the highe warde,
 Which from hir tour lokide thiderward.

Resoun men clepe that lady,
 Which from hir tour delyverly
 Come doun to me withoute more.²
 But she was neither yong ne hoore,³
 Ne high ne lowe, ne fat ne lene,
 But best, as it were in a mene.
 Hir eyen twoo were cleer and lighte
 As ony candelle that brenneth brighte ; 3200
 And on hir heed she hadde a crowne.
 Hir semede wel an high persoune ;
 For rounde enviroun hir crownet
 Was fulle of riche stonys frett.

¹ Promise. ² That is, more ado. ³ Hoary.

Hir goodly semblaunt, by devys,
 I trowe were maad in paradys ;
 For nature hadde nevere such a grace,
 To forge a werk of such compace.
 For certeyn, but-if the letter lye,
 God hym-silf, that is so high,
 Made hir aftir his ymage,
 And gaff hir sith sich avauntage,
 That she hath myght and seignurie
 To kepe men from alle folye ;
 Who-so wole trowe hir lore.
 Ne may offenden nevermore.

3210

And while I stode thus derk and pale,
 Resoun bigan to me hir tale.
 She seide : " Alhayle, my swete freende !
 Foly and childhoode wole thee sheende,
 Which ye have putt in gret affray ;
 Thou hast bought deere ¹ the tyme of May,
 That made thyn herte mery to be.
 In yvelle tyme thou wentist to see
 The gardyne, wherof Ydilnesse
 Bare the keye, and was maistresse
 Whanne thou gedest ² in the daunce
 With hir, and hadde a-queyntaunce :
 Hir aqueyntaunce is perilous,
 First softe, and aftir noious ;
 She hath the trasshed, ³ withoute wene ; ⁴
 The god of Love hadde the not sene,
 Ne hadde Ydilnesse thee conveyed

3230

¹ Dearly suffered for. ² Wentest. ³ Betrayed. ⁴ Doubt.

In the verger ¹ where Myrthe hym pleyed.

If Foly have supprised thee,

Do so that it recovered be ;

' And be wel ware to take nomore

Counsel, that greveth aftir sore ;

He is wise that wole hym silf chastise.

And though a yong man in ony wise 3240

Trespace amonge, and do foly,

Late hym not tarye, but hastily

Late hym amende what so be mys.

“ And eke I counseile thee, iwys,

The god of Love hoolly forgete,

That hath thee in sich peyne sette,

And thee in herte tourmented soo.

I cannot sene how thou maist goo

Other weyes to garisoun ; ²

For Daunger, that is so feloun, 3250

Felly ³ purposith thee to werye,

Which is ful cruel, the soth to seye.

“ And yitt of Daunger cometh no blame,

In rewarde ⁴ of my doughter Shame,

Which hath the roses in hir warde,

As she that may be no musarde. ⁵

And Wikked-tunge is with these two,

That suffrith no man thider goo ;

For er a thing be do he shalle,

Where that he cometh, over alle, 3260

In fourty places, if it be sought,

Seye thyng that nevere was don ne wrought ;

¹ Orchard. ² Heal. ³ Wickedly. ⁴ Regard. ⁵ Muser.

So moche tresoun is in his male,¹
Of falsnesse for to seyne a tale.

“Thou delest with angry folk, ywis ;
Wherefore to thee bettir it is,
From thilke folk away to fare,
For they wole make thee lyve in care.
This is the yvelle that love they calle,
Wherynne ther is but foly alle, 3270
For love is foly everydelle ;
Who loveth, in no wise may do welle,
Ne sette his thought on no good werk.
His scole he lesith,² if he be a clerk ;
Or other craft eke, if he be,
He shal not thryve therynne ; for he
In love shal have more passioun,³
Than monke, hermyte, or chanoun.
The peyne is hard out of mesure,
The joye may eke no while endure ; 3280
And in the possessioun,
Is myche tribulacioun ;
The joye it is so short lastyng,
And but in happe is the getyng ;
For I see there many in travaille,
That atte laste foule fayle.

There was no thyng thi counseler,
Whanne thou were maad the omager⁴
Of god of Love to hastily ;
Ther was no wisdom, but foly. 3290
Thyne herte was joly, but not sage,

¹ Trunk. ² Loseth. ³ Suffering. ⁴ Servant.

Whanne thou were brought in sich arrage,
 To yelde thee so redily,
 And to Love of his grete maistrie.

“ I rede thee Love away to dryve,
 That makith thee recche not of thi lyve.
 The foly more fro day to day
 Shal growe, but thou it putte away.
 Take with thy teeth the bridel faste,
 To daunte thyne herte ; and eke thee caste, 3300
 If that thou maist, to gete thee defence
 For to redresse thi first offence.
 Who-so his herte alwey wole leve,
 Shal fynde amonge that shal hym greve.”

Whanne I hir herde thus me chastise,
 I answerd in ful angry wise.
 I prayed hir ceessen of hir speche,
 Outher to chastise me or teche,
 To bidde me my thought refreyne,²
 Which Love hath caught in his demeyne : 3310
 “ What ! wene ye, love wole consente,
 That me assailith with bowe bente,
 To drawe myne herte out of his honde,
 Which is so qwikly in his bonde ?
 That ye counseyle may nevere be ;
 For whanne he firste arestide me,
 He took myne herte so hoole hym tille,
 That it is no thyng at my wille ;
 He taughte it so hym for to obey,
 That he it sparrede³ with a key.

3320

¹ Wa.tonness ² Restrain. ³ Locked

I pray yow late me be alle stille,
 For ye may welle, if that ye wille,
 Youre wordis waste in idilnesse ;
 For utterly withouten gesse,
 Alle that ye seyn is but in veyne.
 Me were lever dye in the peyne,¹
 Than Love to meward shulde arette²
 Falsheed, or tresoun on me sette.
 I wole me gete prys or blame,
 And love trewe to save my name ; 3330
 Who that me chastisith, I hym hate.”

With that word Resoun wente hir gate,
 Whanne she saugh for no sermonyng
 She myghte me fro my foly brynge.
 Thanne dismaied, I, lefte alle sool,
 Forwery, for-wandred as a fool,
 For I ne knewe no cherisaunce,
 Thanne felle into my remembraunce,
 How Love bade me to purveye
 A felowe, to whom I myghte seye 3340
 My counselle and my pryvete,
 For that shulde moche availe me.

With that bithought I me, that I
 Hadde a felowe faste by,
 Trewe and siker, curteys, and hende,³
 And he was called by name a freende ;
 A trewer felowe was no-wher noon.
 In haste to hym I wente anoon,
 And to hym alle my woo I tolde,

¹ *La peine forte et dure.* ² Impute. ³ Civil

Fro hym right nought I wolde witholde. 335^a
 I tolde hym alle withoute were,¹
 And made my compleynt on Daungere.
 How for to see he was hidous,
 And to me-ward contrarious ;
 The whiche thurgh his cruelte
 Was in poynt to have meygned² me ;
 With Bialacoil whanne he me sey
 Withynne the gardeyn walke and pley,
 Fro me he made hym for to go,
 And I bilefte aloone in woo ; 336^c
 I durste no lenger with hym speke,
 For Daunger seide he wolde be wreke,
 Whanne than he sawe how I wente,
 The freshe bothom for to hente,
 If I were hardy to come neer,
 Bitwene the hay and the roser.

This freend whanne he wiste of my thought,
 He discomfortede me right nought,
 But seide, " Felowe, be not so madde,
 Ne so abaysshed nor bystadde. 337^o
 My silf I knowe fulle welle Daungere,
 And how he is feers³ of his cheere,
 At prime-temps,⁴ Love to manace ;
 Ful ofte I have ben in his caas.
 A feloun firste though that he be,
 Aftir thou shalt hym souple se.
 Of longe passed I knewe hym welle ;
 Ungoodly first though men hym feelee,

¹ Doubt. Troubled. ³ Fierce. ⁴ Spring (Fr. *printemps*)

He wole meke¹ aftir in his beryng
Been, for service and obeysshying. 3380

“I shal thee telle what thou shalt doo, —
Mekely I rede thou go hym to,
Of herte pray hym specialy
Of thy trespase to have mercy,
And hote² hym welle, here to plese,
That thou shalt nevermore hym displese.
Who can best serve of flaterie,
Shalle please Daunger most uttirly.”

Mi freend hath seid to me so wel,
That he me esid hath somdelle, 3390
And eke allegged³ of my torment ;
For thurgh hym had I hardement
Agayn to Daunger for to go,
To preve if I myghte meke hym soo.

To Daunger came I alle ashamed,
The which aforn me hadde blamed,
Desiryng for to pese my woo ;
But over hegge durst I not goo,
For he forbede me the passage.

I fonde hym cruel in his rage, 3400
And in his honde a gret burdoun.⁴
To hym I knelide lowe a-doun,
Ful meke of port, and symple of chere,
And seide, “Sir, I am comen heere
Oonly to aske of you mercy.
Tha! greveth me fulle gretely
Tha! evere my lyf I wratthede you,

¹ Humble himself. ² Promise. ³ Alleviated. ⁴ Staff.

But for to amenden I am come now ;
 With alle my myght, bothe loude and stille,
 To doon right at youre owne wille ; 341c
 For Love made me for to doo
 That I have trespassed hidirto ;
 Fro whom I ne may withdrawe myne herte ;
 Yit shalle I never, for joy ne smerte,
 What so bifalle good or ille,
 Offende more ageyn youre wille.
 Lever I have endure disese,
 Than do that you shulde displese.

“I you require, and pray that ye
 Of me have mercy and pitee, 342c
 To stynte your ire that greveth soo,
 That I wole swere for ever mo
 To be redressid at youre likyng,
 If I trespasse in ony thyng ;
 Save that, I pray thee, graunte me
 A thyng that may not warned¹ be,
 That I may love alle oonly ;
 Noon other thyng of you aske I.

“I shalle doon youre wille, iwys,
 If of youre grace ye graunte me this. 343c
 And ye ne may not letten me,
 For wel wot ye that love is free,
 And I shalle loven sichen that I wille,
 Who evere like it welle or ille ;
 And yit ne wold I for alle Fraunce
 Do thyng to do you displesaunce.”

¹ Refused.

Thanne Daunger fille in his entent
 For to forgeve his male-talent ;¹
 But alle his wratthe yit atte laste
 He hath relese, I preyde so faste. 3440
 "Shortly," he seide, "thy request
 Is not to mochel dishonest ;²
 Ne I wole not wernen³ it thee,
 For yit no thyng engreveth me.
 For though thou love thus evermore,
 To me is neither softe ne soore.
 Love where that the list ; what recchith me,
 So thou fer fro my roses be ?
 Trust not on me for noon assay,
 In any tyme to passe the hay." 3450
 Thus hath he graunted my praier.

Thanne wente I forth withouten were⁴
 Unto my freend, and tolde hym alle,
 Which was right joyfulle of my talle.⁵
 He seide, "Now goth wel thyn affere,
 He shalle to thee be debonaire.
 Though he aforne was dispitous,
 He shalle heere-aftir be gracious.
 If he were touchid on somme good veyne,⁶
 He shulde yit rewen on thi peyne. 3460
 Suffre, I rede,⁷ and no boost make,
 Tille thou at good mes⁸ maist hym take.
 By sufferaunce, and wordis softe,
 A man may overcomen ofte

¹ Ill-will. ² Base. ³ Refuse. ⁴ Confusion. ⁵ Tale. ⁶ The
 French here is "*en bonne veine*," i. e., happily ⁷ Advise. ⁸ Con
 ution. (The French reads, "*en bon point*.")

Hym that aforȝ he hadde in drede,
In bookis sothly as I rede."

Thus hath my freend with gret comfort
Avaunced me with high disport,
Which wolde me good as mych as I.
And thanne anon fulle sodeynly 3470
I toke my leve, and streight I wente
Unto the hay; for gret talente¹
I hadde to sene the freshe bothom,
Wherynne lay my salvacioun;
And Daunger toke kepe if that I
Kepe hym covenant trewely.
So sore I dradde his manasyng,
I durste not breke his biddyng;
For lest that I were of hym shent,
I brake not his comaundement, 3480
For to purchase his good wille.

It was fer for to come ther-tille,
His mercy was to ferre bihynde;
I wepte, for I ne myght it fynde.
I compleyned and sighede sore,
And langwisshed evermore,
For I durste not over goo,
Unto the rose I lovede soo,
Thurgh-out my demyng outerly,
That he hadde knowlege certainly. 3490
Thanne Love me ladde in sich a wise,
That in me ther was no feyntise,²
Falsheed, ne no trecherie.

¹ Inclination. ² Feigning.

And yit he, fulle of vylanye,
 Of disdeyne and of cruelte,
 On me ne wolde have pite,
 His cruel wille for to refreyne,
 Thogh I wepe alwey, and me compleyne.

And while I was in this torment,
 Were come of grace, by God sent, 3500
 Fraunchise, and with hir Pite,
 Fulfiled the bothom of bounte.
 They go to Daunger anoon right
 To forther me with alle her myght,
 And helpe in worde and in dede,
 For welles they saugh that it was nede.

First of hir grace dame Fraunchise
 Hath taken of this emprise :
 She seide, “ Daunger, gret wrong ye do
 To worche this man so myche woo, 3510
 Or pynen hym so angerly ;
 It is to you gret villanye.
 I can not see ne why ne how
 That he hath trespassed ageyn you,
 Save that he loveth ; wherfore ye shulde
 The more in cherete¹ of hym holde.
 The force of love makith hym do this ;
 Who wolde hym blame he dide amys ?
 He leseth² more than ye may do ;
 His payne is harde, ye may see, lo ! 3520
 And Love in no wise wolde consente
 That he have power to repente ;

¹ Affection Loseth.

For though that quyk ye wolde hym sloo,
Fro Love his herte may not goo.

“ Now, swete sir, is it youre ese
Hym forto angre or disese ?
Allas, what may it you avaunce
To done to hym so gret grevaunce ?
What worship is it agayn hym take,
Or on youre man a werre make, 3530
Sith he so lowly every wise
Is redy, as ye luste devise ?
If Love hath caught hym in his lace,
You for tobeye in every caas,
And ben youre suget at youre wille,
Shulde ye therfore willen hym ille ?
Ye shulde hym spare more alle oute,
Than hym that is bothe proude and stoute.
Curtesie wole that ye socour
Hem that ben meke undir youre cure. 3540
His herte is hard that wole not meke,
Whanne men of mekenesse hym biseke.”

“ That is certeyn,” seide Pite ;
“ We se ofte that humilite
Bothe ire and also felonye
Venquyssheth, and also malencolye ;
To stonde forth in such duresse
Is cruelte and wikkidnesse.
Wherfore I pray you, sir Daungere,
For to mayntene no lenger heere 3550
Such cruel werre agayn youre man,
As hoolly youres as ever he can ;

Nor that ye worchen no more woo
 Upon this caytif that langwisshith soo,
 Which wole no more to you trespasse,
 But putte hym hoolly in youre grace.
 His offense ne was but lite ;¹
 The god of Love it was to wite,²
 That he youre thralle so gretly is,
 And if ye harme hym, ye done amys ;
 For he hath hadde fulle hard penaunce,
 Sith that ye refte hym thaqueyntaunce
 Of Bialacoil, his moste joye,
 Which alle hise peynes myght acoye.³

3560

“He was biforn anoyed sore,
 But thanne ye doubled hym welle more ;
 For he of blis hath ben fulle bare,
 Sith Bialacoil was fro hym fare.
 Love hath to hym do gret distresse,
 He hath no nede of more duresse.
 Voideth from hym your ire, I rede ;
 Ye may not wynnen in this dede.
 Makith Bialacoil repeire ageyn,
 And haveth pite upon his peyne ;
 For Fraunchise wole, and I, Pite,
 That mercyful to hym ye be ;
 And sith that she and I accorde,
 Have upon hym misericorde ;
 For I you pray, and eke moneste,⁴
 Nought to refusen oure requeste ;
 For he is hard and felle of thought,
 That for us twoo wole do right nought.”

3570

3580

¹ Little. ² Blame. ³ Soothe. ⁴ Admonish.

Daunger ne myghte no more endure,
He mekede ¹ hym unto mesure.

"I wole in no wise," seith Daungere,
"Denye that ye have asked heere ;
It were to gret uncurtesie.
I wole ye have the companye
Of Bialacoil, as ye devise ;
I wole hym lette ² in no wise."

3590

To Bialacoil thanne wente in high ³
Fraunchise, and seide fulle curteislye,
"Ye have to longe be deignous
Unto this lover, and daungerous,
Fro hym to withdrawe your presence,
Whyche hath do to hym great offence,
That ye not wolde upon hym se ;
Wherefore a soroueful man is he.
Shape ye to paye ⁴ hym, and to please,
Of my love yf ye wol have ease.
Fulfyl his wyl, sythe that ye knowe
Daunger is daunted and brought lowe
Through helpe of me and of Pyte ;
You dare no more aferde be."

3600

"I shal do right as ye wylle,"
Saythe Bialacoil, "for it is skylle,
Sythe Daunger wol that it so be."
Than Fraunchyse hath hym sent to me.

Byalacoil at the begynnyng
Saluede me in his commyng.
No straungenesse was in him sene,

3610

¹ Humbled. ² Hinder. ³ Haste. ⁴ Satisfy.

No more than he ne hadde wrathed bene
 As fayre semblaunt than shewed he me,
 And goodly, as aforne dyd he ;
 And by the honde, withoute doute,
 Wythin the haye ryght al aboute
 He ladde me, with right good chere,
 Al envyron thilke vergere ¹
 That Daunger hadde me chased fro.
 Nowe have I leave overal to goo ; 3620
 Now am I raysed, at my devyse,
 Fro helle unto paradyse.
 Thus Bialacoil of gentylnesse,
 With al his payne and besynesse,
 Hathe shewed me onely of grace
 The estres ² of the swote place.
 I sawe the rose, whan I was nygh,
 Was gretter woxen, and more high,
 Fresshe, roddy, and fayre of hewe,
 Of coloure ever yliche newe 3630
 And whan I hadde it longe sene,
 I sawe that through the leves grene
 The rose spredde to spannyshinge ; ³
 To sene it was a goodly thyng.
 But it ne was so sprede on brede,
 That men withyn myghte knowe the sede,
 For it covert was and close
 Bothe with the leves and with the rose.
 The stalke was even and grene upright,
 It was theron a goodly syght ; 3640

¹ Garden. ² Passages. ³ Full bloom.

And wel the better withoute wene,
 For the seede was nat i-sene.
 Ful fayre it spradde, the God of blesse !¹
 For suche another, as I gesse,
 Aforne ne was, ne more vermayle.
 I was abawed² for marveyle,
 For ever the fayrer that it was,
 The more I am bounden in Loves laas.

Longe I abode there, sothe to saye,
 Tyl Bialacoil I ganne to praye, 3650
 Whan that I sawe him in no wyse
 To me warnerr³ his servyse,
 That he me wolde graunt a thyng,
 Whiche to remembre is wel syttyng;
 This is to sayne, that of his grace
 He wold me geve leysar and space
 To me that was so desyrous
 To have a kyssynge precious
 Of thilke goodly freshe rose,
 That so swetely smelleth in my nose ; 3660
 " For if it you displeasede nought,
 I wolde gladly, as I have sought,
 Have a cosse⁴ therof freely
 Of your gefte ; for certainly
 I wol none have but by your leve,
 So lothe me were you for to greve."

He sayde, " Frend, so God me spede,
 Of Chastite I have such drede,
 Thou shuldest nat vurned be for me,

¹ May God it bless ² Abashed. ³ Forbid. ⁴ Kiss.

Put I dare nat for Chastyte. 3670

Agayne her dare I nat mysdo,
 For alwaye byddeth she me so
 To geve no lover leave to kysse ;
 For who therto maye wynnen, ywisse,
 He of the surplus of the praye
 May lyve in hoope to gette some daye.
 For who-so kyssynge may attayne,
 Of loves payne hath, sothe to sayne,
 The best and moste avenaunt,¹
 And earnest of the remenaunt.” 3680

Of hys answer I sighede sore ;
 I durst assaye him tho no more,
 I hadde suche drede to greve hym aye.
 A man shulde nat to moche assaye
 To chafe hys frende out of measure,
 Nor putte his lyfe in aventure ;
 For no man at the fyrste stroke
 Ne maye nat fele downe an oke ;
 Nor of the reysyns have the wyne,
 'Tyl grapes be ripe and wel afyne,² 3690
 Be sore empressid, I you ensure,
 And drawen out of the pressure.

But I forpeyned wonder stronge,
 Though that I aboode right longe
 Aftir the kis, in peyne and woo,
 Sith I to kis desirede soo :
 Tille that, rewyng on my distresse,
 Ther come Venus the goddesse,

¹ Agreeable. ² Lines 3595-3690 are from *Speghel*

Which ay werieth ¹ Chastite,
 Came of hir grace to socoure me, 3700
 Whose myght is knowe ferre and wide,
 For she is modir of Cupide,
 The god of Love, blynde as stoon,
 That helpith lovers many oon.

This lady brought in hir right honde
 Of brennyng fyre a blasyng bronde ;
 Wherof the flawme and hote fire
 Hath many a lady in desire
 Of love brought, and sore hette,
 And in hir servise her herte i-sette. 3710
 This lady was of good entaile,²
 Right wondirfulle of apparayle ;
 Bi hir atyre so bright and shene,
 Men myghte perceyve welle, and sene,
 She was not of religioun.³

Nor I nelle make menciou
 Nor of robe, nor of tresour,
 Of broche, neithir of hir rich attour ;
 Ne of hir girdille aboute hir side,
 For that I nylle not longe abide. 3720
 But knowith wel, that certeynly
 She was araied richely.
 Devoyde of pruyde certeyn she was.

To Bialacoil she wente apas,
 And to hym shortly in a clause
 She seide : " Sir, what is the cause
 Ye ben of port so daungerous ⁴

¹ Warreth aganst. ² Form. ³ A religious order. ⁴ Haughty

Unto this lover, and deynous,¹
 To graunte hym no thyng but a kisse?
 To werne² it hym ye done amysse, 3730
 Sith welle ye wote, how that he
 Is Loves servaunt, as ye may see,
 And hath beaute, wher-through he is
 Worthy of love to have the blis.

“How he is semely, biholde and see,
 How he is faire, how he is free,
 How he is swoote and debonaire,
 Of age yonge, lusty, and faire.
 Ther is no lady so hawteyne,
 Duchesse, ne countesse, ne chasteleyne,³ 3740
 That I nolde holde hir ungoodly,
 For to refuse hym outterly.

“His breth is also good and swete,
 And eke his lippis rody, and mete
 Oonly to pleyne, and to kisse.
 Graunte hym a kis, of gentilnysse!
 His teth arn also white and clene;
 Me thenkith wrong withouten wene,
 If ye now werne hym, trustith me,
 To graunte that a kis have he. 3750
 The lasse to helpe hym that ye haste,
 The more tyme shul ye waste.”

Whanne the flawme of the verry bronde
 That Venus brought in hir right honde
 Hadde Bialacoil with hete smete,⁴

¹ Disdainful. ² Refuse. ³ Lady of a castle. ⁴ Smitten.

Anoon he bade me, withouten lette,
Grauntede to me the rose kisse.

Thanne of my peyne I gan to lysse,¹
And to the rose anoon wente I
And kyside it fulle feithfully. 3760

Thar no man aske if I was blithe ;
Whanne the savour soft and lythe
Stroke to myn herte withoute more,
And me alegged² of my sore,
So was I fulle of joye and blisse.

It is faire sich a flour to kisse,
It was so swoote and saverous.
I myght not be so angwisshous,
That I mote glad and joly be,
Whanne that I remembre me. 3770

Yit ever among, sothly to seyne,
I suffre noye and moche peyne.

The see may never be so stille,
That with a litel wynde it wille
Overwhelme and turne also,
As it were woode,³ in wawis goo.
Aftir the calme the trouble soun

Mote folowe, and chaunge as the moone.
Right so farith Love, that selde in oon
Holdith his anker ; for right anoon 3780
Whanne they in ese wene beste to lyve,
They ben with tempest alle for-dryve.
Who serveth Love can telle of woo,
The stoundemele joie mote overgoo.

¹ Lessen. ² Alleviated. ³ Mad.

Now he hurteth, and now he cureth,
For selde in oo poynt Love endureth.

Now is it right me to procede,
How Shame gan medle and take hede,
Thurgh whom fele¹ angres I have hadde ;
And how the stronge walle was maad, 3790
And the castelle of brede and lengthe,
That god of Love wanne with his strengthe.

Alle this in romance wille I sette,
And for no thyng ne wille I lette,
So that it lykyng to hir be,
That is the flour of beaute ;
For she may best my labour quyte
That I for hir love shal endite.

Wikkid-tunge, that the covyne²
Of every lover can devyne 3800
Worste, and addith more somdelle,
For Wikkid-tunge seith never welle,
To meward bare he right gret hate,
Espyng me erly and late,
Tille he hath sene the grete chere
Of Bialacoil and me ifeere.³
He myghte not his tunge withstonde
Worse to reporte than he fonde,
He was so fulle of cursed rage ;
It satte hym welle of his lynage, 3810
For him an 'rish⁴ womman bare.

His tunge was fyled sharpe, and square,
Poignaunt and right kervyng,

¹ Many. ² Secret. ³ Together. ⁴ Wrathful (ire-ish)

And wonder bitter in spekyng.
 For whanne that he me gan espie,
 He swoore, affermyng sikirlye,¹
 Bitwene Bialacoil and me
 Was yvel aquayntaunce and pryve.

He spake therof so folilye,
 That he awakide Jelousye ; 3820
 Which alle afrayed ² in his risyng,
 Whanne that he herde janglyng,
 He ran anoon as he were woode
 To Bialacoil there that he stode ;
 Which hadde lever in this caas
 Have ben at Reynes or Amyas ;
 For foot-hoot ³ in his felonye,
 To hym thus seide Jelousie :
 “ Why hast thou ben so negligent,
 To kepen, whanne I was absent, 3830
 This verger heere left in thi warde ?
 To me thou haddist no rewarde,⁴
 To truste — to thy confusioun —
 Hym this, to whom suspeccioun
 I have right gret, for it is nede ;
 It is welle shewed by the dede.
 Grete faute in thee now have I founde ;
 By God, anoon thou shalt be bounde,
 And faste loken in a tour,
 Withoute refuyt ⁵ or socour. 3840
 “ For Shame to longe hath be thee froo ;
 Dver soone she was a-goo.

¹ Surely. ² Confused. ³ Hastily. ⁴ Regard. ⁵ Refuge.

Whanne thou hast lost bothe drede and feere,
 It semede wel she was not heere.
 She ne was bisy in no wyse,
 To kepe thee and chastise,
 And for to helpen Chastite
 To kepe the roser, as thenkith me.
 For thanne this knave so booldely
 Ne shulde not have be hardy 3850
 In this verge hadde such game,
 Which now me turneth to gret shame."

Bialacoil nyste what to seye ;
 Fulle fayn he wolde have fled aweye,
 For feere han hidde, nere¹ that he
 Alle sodeynly toke² hym with me.
 And whanne I saugh he hadde soo,
 This **Jelousie**, take us twoo,
 I was a-stoned,³ and knewe no rede,
 But fledde away for verrey drede. 3860

Thanne Shame cam forth fulle symply ;
 She wente⁴ have trespaced fulle gretly ;
 Humble of hir port, and made it symple,
 Weryng a vayle in-stide of wymple,
 As nonnys don, in her abbey.
 By-cause hir herte was in affray,⁵
 She gan to speke withynne a throwe
 'To Jelousie, right wonder lowe.
 First of his grace she bysoughte
 And seide, "Sire, ne leveth⁶ noughte 3870
 Wikkid-tunge, that fals espie,

¹ Were it not. ² Detected. ³ Astonished. ⁴ Thought ⁵ Fright
 Believe.

Which is so glad to feyne and lye.
 He hath you maad, thurgh flateryng,
 On Bialacoil a fals lesyng.

“ His falsnesse is not now a-newe,
 It is to long that he hym knewe.
 This is not the firste day ;
 For Wikkid-tunge hath custome ay,
 Yonge folkis to be-wreye,
 And false lesynges on hem lye. 388c
 Yit nevertheles I see amonge,
 That the loigne ¹ it is so longe
 Of Bialacoil, hertis to lure,
 In Loves servyse for to endure,
 Drawyng suche folk hym too,
 That he hath no thyng with to doo ;
 But in sothnesse I trowe nought,
 That Bialacoil hadde ever in thought
 To do trespase or vylonye ;
 But for his modir Curtesie 389c
 Hath taught hym ever for to be
 Good of aqueyntaunce and pryve,
 For he loveth noon hevynesse,
 But mirthe and pley, and alle gladnesse ;
 He hateth alle trechorus,
 Soleyn ² folk and envyouus ;
 For ye witen how that he
 Wole ever glad and joyfulle be
 Hæstly with folk to pleye.

 I have be negligent in good feye 390c

¹ Tether, liberty. ² Sole, by themselves

To chastise hym ; therfore now I
Of herte crye you heere mercy,
That I have been so recheles
To tamen hym, withouten lees.
Of my foly I me repente ;
Now wole I hoole sette myn entente
To kepe bothe lowe and stille
Bialacoil to do youre wille."

"Shame, Shame !" seyde Jelousie,
"To be bytrasshed gret drede have I. 3910

Leccherie hath clombe so bye,
That almoost blered is myn yhe ;
No wonder is, if that drede have I.
Over-alle regnyth Lecchery,
Whos myght growith eyght and day.
Bothe in cloistre and in abbey,
Chastite is werried over-alle.

Therfore I wole with siker walle
Close bothe roses and roser.
I have to longe in this maner 3920
Left hem unclosid wilfully ;
Wherfore I am right inwardly
Sorrowfulle and repente me.

But now they shalle no lenger be
Unclosid ; and yit I drede sore,
I shalle repente ferthermore,
For the game goth alle amys.

Counselle I must newe, ywys
I have to longe trusted thee,
But now it shal no lenger be ; 3930

For he may best, in every cost,
Disceyve that men tristen most.

“I see wel that I am nygh shent,
But-if I sette my fulle entent
Remedye to purveye.
Therfore close I shalle the weye,
Fro hem that wole the rose espie,
And come to wayte me vilonye ;
For, in good feith and in trouthe,
I wole not lette for no slouthe,
To lyve the more in sikirnesse,
Do make anoon a fortresse,
Thanne close the roses of good savour.

394^o

“In myddis shalle I make a tour
To putte Bialacoil in prisoun.
For evere I drede me of tresoun.
I trowe I shal hym kepe soo,
That he shal have no myght to goo
Aboute to make companye
To hem that thenke of vylanye ;
Ne to no such as hath ben heere
Afor, and founde in hym good chere,
Which han assailed hym to shende,
And with her trowandyse ¹ to blynde.
A foole is eythe ² to bigyle,
But may I lyve a litel while,
He shal forthenke ³ his fair semblaunt.”

395^o

And with that word came Drede avaunt,⁴
Which was abasshed, and in gret fere,

¹ Begging ² Easy. ³ Repent. ⁴ Forward

Whanne he wiste Jelousie was there. 3960

He was for drede in sich affray,
That not a word he durste say,
But quakyng stode fulle stille aloone, —
Til Jelousie his weye was gone, —
Save Shame, that him not forsoke ;
Bothe Drede and she ful sore quoke,
That atte laste Drede abreyde,¹
And to his cosyn Shame seide :

“Shame,” he seide, “in sothfastnesse,
To me it is gret hevynesse, 3970

That the noyse so ferre is go,
And thilke sclaundre of us twoo.
But sithe that it is byfalle,
We may it not ageyn calle,
Whanne onys sprongen is a fame.
For many a yeer withouten blame
We han ben, and many a day,
For many an Aprille and many a **May**
We han i-passed, not shamed,
Tille Jelousie hath us blamed
Of mystrust and suspeticun
Causeles, withoute enchesoun.

3980

“Go we to Daunger hastily,
And late us shewe hym openly,
That he hath not aright i-wrought,
Whanne that he sette nought his thought
To kepe better the purprise ;²
In his doying he is not wise.

¹ Started up. ² Inclosure

He hath to us i-do gret wronge,
 That hath i-suffred now so longe 3990
 Bialacoil to have his wille,
 Alle his lustes to fulfille.
 He must amende it utterly,
 Or ellys shalle he vilaynesly
 Exiled be out of this londe ;
 For he the werre may not withstonde
 Of Jelousie, nor the greef,
 Sith Bialacoil is at myscheef."

To Daunger, Shame and Drede anoon
 The righte weyes ben agoon. 4000
 The cherle thei founden hem afor
 Liggyng undir an hawethorn.
 Undir his heed no pilowe was,
 But in the stede a trusse of gras.
 He slombred, and a nappe he toke,
 Tylle Shame pitously hym shoke,
 And grete manace on hym gan make.

" Why slepist thou whanne thou shulde
 wake ? "

Quod Shame ; " thou doist us vylanye !
 Who tristith thee, he doth folye, 4010
 To kepe roses or bothoms,
 Whanne thei ben faire in her sesouns.
 Thou art woxe to familiere
 Where thou shulde be straunge of chere,
 Stoute of thi porte, redy to greve.
 Thou doist gret folye for to leve
 Bialacoil here-inne to calle

The yonder man to shenden ¹ us alle.
 Though that thou slepe, we may here
 Of Jelousie grete noyse heere. 4020
 Art thou now late? rise up an high,²
 And stoppe sone and delyverly
 Alle the gappis of the hay;³
 Do no favour I thee pray.
 It fallith no thyng to thy name,
 To make faire semblaunt, where thou maist
 blarie.

“Yf Bialacoil be sweete and free,
 Dogged and felle ⁴ thou shuldist be ;
 Froward and outerageous, ywis !
 A cherl chaungeth that curteis is. 4030
 This have I herd ofte in seiying,
 That ‘man ne may for no dauntying
 Make a sperhauke of a bosarde.’
 Alle men wole holde thee for musarde,⁵
 That debonair have founden thee,
 It sittith thee nought curteis to be ;
 To do men plesaunce or servise,
 In thee it is recreaundise.
 Lete thi werkis fer and nere
 Be like thi name, which is Daungere.” 4040

Thanne alle abawid in shewing,
 Anoon spake Drede, right thus seiying,
 And seide, “Daunger, I drede me,
 That thou ne wolt bisy be
 To kepe that thou hast to kepe ;

¹ Ruin. ² Quickly. ³ Hedge. ⁴ Fierce. ⁵ Muser.

Whanne thou shuldist wake, thou art a-slepe.

Thou shalt be greved certeynly,

If the asprie Jelousie,

Or if he fynde thee in blame.

He hath to day assailed Shame, 4050

And chased a-wey, with gret manace,

Bialacoil oute of this place,

And swereth shortly that he shalle

Enclose hym in a sturdy walle ;

And alle is for thi wikkednesse,

For that thee faileth straungenesse.

Thyne herte I trowe be failed alle ;

Thou shalt repente in specialle,

If Jelousie the soothe knewe ;

Thou shalt forthenke, and sore rewe." 4060

With that the cherl his clubbe gan shake,

Frounyng his eyen gan to make,

And hidous chere ; as man in rage

For ire he brente in his visage

Whanne that he herd hym blamed soo,

He seide, " Oute of my witte I goo ;

To be discomfyt I have gret wronge.

Certis, I have now lyved to longe,

Sith I may not this closer kepe ;

Alle quykke I wolde be dolven deepe, 4070

If ony man shal more repeire

Into this gardyne for foule or faire.

Myne herte for ire goth a-fere,

That I lete ony entre heere.

" I have do folie now I see,

But now it shalle amended bee.
 Who settith foot heere ony more,
 Truly he shalle repente it sore ;
 For no man moo in to this place
 Of me to entre shal have grace. 4080
 Lever I hadde with swerdis tweyne,
 Thurgh-oute myne herte, in every veyne
 Perced to be, with many a wounde,
 Than slouthe shulde in me be founde.
 From hennes-forth, by nyght or day,
 I shalle defende it if I may
 Withouten ony excepcioun
 Of ech maner condicioun ;
 And if I eny man it graunte,
 Holdeth me for recreaunte ! ” 4090

Thanne Daunger on his feet gan stonde,
 And hente a burdoun¹ in his honde.
 Wroth in his ire ne lefte he nought,
 But thurgh the yerger² he hath sought,
 If he myghte fynde hole or trace,³
 Where thurgh that me mote forth-by pace,
 Or ony gappe, he dide it close,
 That no man myghte touche a rose
 Of thilke roser alle aboute ;
 He shitteth⁴ every man withoute. 4100

Thus day by day Daunger is wers,
 More wondirfulle and more dyvers,
 And feller eke than ere he was ;
 For hym fulle ofte I synge “ Allas ! ”

¹ Seized a staff. ² Orchard ³ Path ⁴ Shutteth

For I ne may nought thurgh his ire
 Recovere that I moost desire.
 Myn herte, alas, wole brest a-twoo,
 For Bialacoil I wratthede soo.
 For certeynly in every membre
 I quoke, whanne I me remembre
 Of the bothom, which I wolde
 Fulle ofte a day sene and biholde.
 And whanne I thenke upon the kisse,
 And how myche joye and blisse,
 I hadde thurgh the savour swete,
 For wante of it I grone and grete.
 Me thenkith I fele yit in my nose
 The swete savour of the rose.

4110

And now I woot that I mote goo
 So fer the freshe floures froo,
 To me fulle welcome were the deth ;
 Absens therof, alas, me sleeth !
 For whilom with this rose, alas,
 I touchede nose, mouth, and face ;
 But now the deth I must abide.
 But Love consente another tyde,
 That onys I touche may and kisse,
 I trowe my peyne shalle never lisse.
 Theron is alle my coveitise,
 Which brente myn herte in many wise.
 Now shal repaire agayn sighinge,
 Long wacche on nyghtis, and no slepinge ;
 Thought in wisshing, torment and woo,
 With many a turnyng to and froo,

4120

4130

That half my peyne I can not telle.
 For I am fallen into helle,
 From paradys and welthe, the more
 My turment greveth ; more and more
 Anoieth now the bittirnesse,
 That I to-forn have felt swetnesse. 4140
 And Wikkid-tunge, thurgh his falshede,
 Causeth alle my woo and drede.
 On me he leieth a vitous charge,
 Bi-cause his tunge was to large.¹

Now it is tyme shortly that I
 Telle you som thyng of Jelousie,
 That was in gret suspecioun.
 Aboute hym lefte he no masoun,
 That stoon coude leye, ne querroure,²
 He hirede hem to make a tour. 4150
 And first, the roses for to kepe,
 Aboute hem made he a dicke deepe,
 Right wondir large, and also broode ;
 Upon the whiche also stode
 Of squared stoon a sturdy walle,
 Which on a cragge was founded alle,
 And right grette thikkenesse eke it bare.
 Aboute it was founded square
 An hundred fademe on every side,
 It was alle liche longe and wide. 4160
 Test ony tyme it were assayled,
 Ful wel aboute it was batayled ;
 And rounde enviroun eke were sette

¹ Free. ² Quarryman.

Ful many a riche and faire tourette.
 At every corner of this walle
 Was sette a tour fulle pryncipalle ;
 And everich hadde, withoute fable,
 A porte-colys ¹ defensable
 To kepe of enemyes, and to greve,
 And there her force wolde preve. 4170
 And eke amydde, this purprise
 Was maad a tour of gret maistrise ;
 A fairer saugh no man with sight,
 Large and wide, and of gret myght.
 They ne dredde noon assaut,
 Of gynne, ² gunne, nor skaffaut.

The temprure ³ of the mortere
 Was maad of lycour wonder dere ;
 Of quykke lyme persant and egre,
 The which was tempred with vynegre. 4180
 The stoon was hard of ademan,
 Wherof they made the foundement.
 The tour was rounde maad in compas ;
 In alle this world no riccher was,
 Ne better ordeigned therwith alle.
 Aboute the tour was maad a walle,
 So that bitwixt that and the tour,
 Roses were sette of swete savour,
 With many roses that thei bere.

And eke withynne the castelle were 4190
 Spryngoldes, ⁴ gunnes, bows, and archers ;

¹ Portcullis. ² Engine. ³ Means of bringing to a proper consistency. ⁴ Mangonels.

And eke above atte corners
Men seyn¹ over the walle stonde
Grete engynes, who were nygh honde ;
And in the kernels² heere and there,
Of arblasters³ grete plente were.
Noon armure myght her stroke withstonde,
It were foly to prece to honde.

Withoute the diche were lystes maade,
With walle batayled large and brade, 4200
For men and hors shulde not atteyne
To neighe the dyche over the pleyne.
Thus Jelousie hath enviroun
Sette aboute his garnysoun
With walles rounde, and diche depe,
Only the roser for to kepe.
And Daunger bothe erly and late
The keyes kepte of the utter gate,
The which openeth toward the eest.
And he hadde with hym atte leest 4210
Thritty servauntes echon by name.

That other gate kepte Shame,
Which openede, as it was couth,
Toward the parte of the south.
Sergeauntes assigned were hir too
Ful many, hir wille for to doc.

Thanne Drede hadde in hir baillie
The keypyng of the conestablerye,
Toward the north, I undirstonde,
That openyde upon the lyfte honde, 4220

¹ Saw ² Battlements. ³ Cross-bows

The which for no thyng may be sure
 But-if she do hir bisy cure
 Erly on morowe and also late,
 Strongly to shette and barre the gate.
 Of every thing that she may see,
 Drede is aferd, wher-so she be ;
 For with a puff of litelle wynde,
 Drede is a-stonyed in hir mynde.
 Therefore, for stelyng of the rose,
 I rede hir nought the gate unclose.
 A foulis flight wole make hir flee,
 And eke a shadowe if she it see.

4230

Thanne Wikked-tunge fulle of envye,
 With soudiours ¹ of Normandye,
 As he that causeth alle the bate,²
 Was keper of the fourthe gate,
 And also to the tother three
 He wente fulle ofte for to see.
 Whanne his lotte was to wake a-nyghte,
 His instrumentis wolde he dighte,
 For to blowe and make sowne,
 Ofter thanne he hath enchesoun ;³
 And walken oft upon the walle,
 Corners and wikettis over alle
 Fulle narwe serchen and espie ;
 Though he nought fonde, yit wolde he lye.

4240

Discordaunt ever fro armonye,
 And distoned from melodie,
 Controve ⁴ he wolde, and foule fayle,

¹ Soldiers. ² Debate. ³ Occasion. ⁴ Improvise

With hornepipes of Cornewaile.¹ 4250

In floytes made he discordaunce,
And in his musyk, with myschaunce,
He wolde seyn with notes newe,
That he ne fonde no womman trewe,
Ne that he saugh never in his lyf,
Unto hir husbonde a trewe wyf ;
Ne noon so ful of honeste,
That she nyl laughe and mery be,
Whan that she hereth, or may espie,
A man speken of lecherie.

4260

Everiche of hem hath somme vice ;
Oon is dishonest, another is nyce ;
If oon be fulle of vylanye,
Another hath a likerous ighe ;
If oon be fulle of wontonesse,
Another is a chideresse.

Thus Wikked-tunge, God geve him shame !
Can putt everychone in blame ;
Withoute dissert and causeles,
He lieth, though they ben gilteles.
I have pite to sene the sorwe,
That walketh bothe eve and morwe,
To innocentis doith such grevaunce ;
I pray God geve him evel chaunce,
That he ever so bisie is.

4270

Of ony womman to seyn amys !

Eke Jelousie God confounde !
That hath i-maad a tour so rounde,

¹ Cornouaille in Brittany.

And made aboute a garisoun,
 To sette Bealacoil in prisoun ; 4280
 The which is shette there in the tour,
 Ful longe to holde there sojour,
 There for to lyven in penaunce,
 And for to do hym more grevaunce,
 Which hath ordeyned Jelousie,
 An olde vekke ¹ for to espye
 The maner of his governaunce ;
 The whiche devel in hir enfaunce
 Hadde lerned of Loves arte,
 And of his pleyes toke hir parte ; 4290
 She was except ² in his servise.
 She knewe eche wrenche and every gise
 Of love, and every wile,
 It was hard her hir to gile.

Of Bealacoil she toke ay hede,
 That evere he lyveth in woo and drede.
 He kepte hym koy and eke pryve,
 Lest in hym she hadde see
 Ony foly countenaunce,
 For she knewe alle the olde daunce.³

And aftir this, whanne Jelousie
 Hadde Bealacoil in his baillie,
 An shette hym up that was so fre, —
 For seure of hym he wolde be, —
 He trusteth sore in his castelle :
 The stronge werk hym liketh welle.

¹ Woman (Ital. *vecchia*, an old woman). ² Accepted. ³ Game,
 trick (French idiom). Cf *Canterbury Tales*, ll. 476, 9153.

He dradde not that no glotouns
Shulde stele his roses or bothoms.
The roses weren assured alle,
Defenced with the stronge walle. 4310

Now Jelousie fulle wel may be
Of drede devoide in liberte,
Whether that he slepe or wake,
For his roses may noon be take.

But I, allas, now morne shalle ;
Bi-cause I was withoute the walle,
Fulle moche doole¹ and moone I made.
Who hadde wist what woo I hadde,
I trowe he wolde have had pite. 4320
Love to deere hadde soolde to me

The good that of his love hadde I.
I wente aboute alle queyntely ;
But now thurgh doublyng of my peyne
I see he wolde it selle ageyne,
And me a newe bargeyn leere,²
The which alle oute the more is deere
For the solace that I have lorn,
Thanne I hadde it never a-forn.

Certayn I am ful like in deede
To hym that caste in erthe his seede ; 4330
And hath joie of the newe spryng,
Whanne it greneth in the gynnyng,³
And is also faire and freshe of flour,
Lusty to seen, swoote of odour.
But er he it in his sheves shere,

¹ Mourning ² Learn ³ Beginning.

May falle a weder that shal it dere,¹
 And maken it to fade and falle,
 The stalke, the greyne, and floures alle ;
 That to the tylyers ² is fordone
 The hope that he hadde to soone. 4340

I drede certeyn that so fare I ;
 For hope and travaile sikerlye
 Ben me byraft alle with a storme ;
 The floure nel ³ seeden of my corne.
 For Love hath so avaunced me,
 Whanne I bigan my pryvite
 To Bialacoil alle for to telle,
 Whom I ne fonde froward ne felle,
 But toke a-gree ⁴ alle hool my play ;
 But Love is of so hard assay, 4350
 That alle at oonys he revede ⁵ me,
 Whanne I wente ⁶ best aboven to have be.

It is of Love, as of Fortune,
 That chaungeth ofte, and nyl contune ;⁷
 Which whilom wole on folke smyle,
 And glowmbe ⁸ on hem another while ;
 Now freend, now foo, thou shalt hir feele,
 For a twynklyng turne hir wheele.

She can writhe hir heed a-wey,
 This is the concours of hir pley ; 4360
 She canne arise that doth morne,
 And whirle adown and over-turne
 Who sittith hieghst, but as hir luste ;

¹ Hurt. ² Tillers. ³ Will not. ⁴ Agreeably. ⁵ Bereaved
⁶ Thought. ⁷ Continue. ⁸ Lower.

A foole is he that wole hir truste.
For it is I that am come down
Thurgh change and revolucioun !

Sith Bealacoil mote fro me twynne,¹
Shette in the prisoun yonde withynne,
His absence at myn herte I fele ;
For alle my joye and alle myne hele 4370
Was in hym and in the rose,
That but thou wole, which hym doth close,
Opene, that I may hym see,
Love nyl not that I cured be
Of the peynes that I endure,
Nor of my cruel aventure.

A, Bialacoil, myn owne deere !
Though thou be now a prisonere,
Kepe atte leste thyne herte to me,
And suffre not that it daunted be, 4380
Ne late not Jelousie in his rage
Putten thine herte in no servage.
Al-though he chastice thee withoute,
And make thy body unto hym loute,
Have herte as hard as dyamaunt,
Stedefast, and nought pliaunt.

In prisoun though thi body be
At large kepe thyne herte free.
A trewe herte wole not plie ²
For no manace that it may drye.³ 4390
If Jelousie doth thee payne,
Quyte hym his while thus agayne,

¹ Separate. ² Bend. ³ Suffer.

To venge thee atte leest in thought,
 If other way thou maist nought ;
 And in this wise sotilly
 Worche, and wynne the maistrie.
 But yit I am in gret affray,¹
 Lest thou do not as I say ;
 I drede thou canst me gret maugre,²
 That thou enprisoned art for me ; 4400
 But that not for my trespass,
 For thurgh me never discovred was
 Yit thyng that oughte be secree.

Wel more anoy is in me,
 Than is in thee of this myschaunce ;
 For I endure more harde penaunce
 Than ony can seyn or thynke,
 That for the sorwe almost I synke.
 Whanne I remembre me of my woo,
 Fulle nygh out of my witt I goo. 4410
 Inward myn herte I feelee blede,
 For comfortles the deth I drede.
 Owe I not wel to have distresse,
 Whanne false,³ thurgh hir wikkednesse,
 And traitours, that arn envyous,
 To noyen me be so coragious ?

A, Bialacoil ! fulle wel I see,
 That they hem shape to disceyve thee,
 To make thee buxom⁴ to her lawe,
 And with her corde thee to drawe 4420
 Where so hem lust, right at her wille ;

¹ Fright. ² Bad favor. ³ That is, false ones. ⁴ Obedient.

I drede they have thee brought thertille.¹

Withoute comfort, thought me sleeth ;

This game wole brynge me to my deeth.

For if youre good wille I leesc,²

I mote be deed ; I may not chese.

And if that thou forgete me,

Myne herte shal nevere in likyng be ;

Nor elles-where fynde solace,

If I be putte out of youre grace,

443^o

As it shal never been, I hope ;

Thanne shulde I falle in wanhope.³

Allas, in wanhope⁴ — nay, *pardee* !

For I wole never dispeired be.

If Hope me faile, thanne am I

Ungracious and unworthy ;

In Hope I wole comforted be,

For Love, whanne he bitaught hir me,

Seide that Hope, where-so I goo,

Shulde ay be reles to my woo.

444^o

But what and she my baalis beete,⁵

And be to me curteis and sweete ?

She is in no thyng fulle certeyne.

Lovers she putt in fulle gret payne,

And makith hem that woo to deele.

Hir faire biheeste disceyveth feele,⁶

For she wole byhote sikirly,⁷

And failen aftir outrely.

¹ Thereto. ² Lose. ³ At this line ends the translation of the portion of the Romance written by Guillaume de Lorris. He wrote 4070 lines, and died (perhaps about 1200) probably before the birth of Jean de Meun, who completed the allegory by adding 17,970 lines, of which but a fragment was translated. ⁴ Despair. ⁵ Heal my bala. ⁶ Many. ⁷ Promise surely.

A, that is a fulle noyous thyng !
 For many a lover in lovyng 4450
 Hangeth upon hir, and trusteth faste,
 Whiche leese her travel¹ at the laste.
 Of thyng to comen she woot right nought ;
 Therefore, if it be wysely sought,
 Hir counseille foly is to take.
 For many tymes, whanne she wole make
 A fulle good silogisme, I dreede
 That aftirward ther shal in deede
 Folwe an evelle conclusioun ;
 This putte me in confusioun. 4460
 For many tymes I have it seen,
 That many have bigyled been,
 For trust that they have sette in hope,
 Which felle hem aftirward a-slope.²

But, nevertheles, yit gladly she wolde,
 That he that wole hym with hir holde
 Hadde alle tymes his purpos clere,
 Withoute deceyte or ony were.³
 That she desireth sikirly ;
 Whanne I hir blamed, I dide foly. 4470
 But what avayleth hir good wille,
 Whanne she no may staunche my stounde⁴ ille ?
 That helpith litel that she may doo,
 Outake biheest⁵ unto my woo.
 And heeste certeyn in no wise,
 Withoute gift, is not to preise.

¹ Lose their labor. ² Slipped away. ³ Doubt. Pain (*Scotch stound*, a stab ; Icelandic, *stunda* ; O. E. *stunian*, to strike). ⁴ Es
 cept promise.

Whanne heest and deede¹ a-sundry varie,
They doon a gret contrarie.

Thus am I possed up and doun
With doole,² thought, and confusioun; 4480
Of my disese ther is no noumbre.

Daunger and Shame me encumbre,
Drede also, and Jelousie,

And Wikked-tunge fulle of envie,
Of whiche the sharpe and cruel ire
Fulle ofte me putte in gret martire.

They han my joye fully lette,³

Sith Bialacoil they have bishette

Fro me in prisoun wikkidly,

Whom I love so entierly

4490

That it wole my bane bee,

But I the sonner may hym see.

And yit more-over wurst of alle,

There is sette to kepe — foule hir bi-falle! —

A rympld vekke,⁴ ferre onne in age,

Frownyng and yelow in hir visage,

Which in a-wayte lyth day and nyght,

That noon of hem may have a sight.

Now mote my sorwe enforced⁵ be;

Fulle soth it is, that Love gaf me

4500

Thre wonder giftes of his grace,

Whiche I have lorn, now in this place,

Sith they ne may withoute drede

Helfen but lytel, who taketh heede.

¹ Promise and deed. ² Sorrow (Fr *douil*, mourning) ³ Stinted
Hag. Cf. 1 4286. ⁵ Increased.

For here availeth no Swete-thought,
 And Sweete-speche helpith right nought. ▲
 The thridde was called Swete-lokyng,
 That now is lorn withoute lesyng.
 Giftes were faire, but not forthy ¹
 They helpe me but symply, 4516
 But Bialacoil loosed be,
 To gon at large and to be free.
 For hym my lyf lyth alle in doute,
 But-if he come the rather ² oute.
 Allas ! I trowe it wole not bene !
 For how shuld I evermore hym sene ?
 He may not oute, and that is wronge,
 By-cause the tour is so stronge.

How shulde he oute ? by whos prowesse,
 Oute of so stronge a forteresse ? 4520
 By me certeyn it nyl be doo ;
 God woot I have no witte therto !
 But wel I woot I was in rage,
 Whonne I to Love dide homage.
 Who was in cause, in sothfastnesse,
 But hir-silf, dame Idelnesse,
 Which me conveiede thurgh faire praiere
 To entre into that faire verger ?
 She was to blame me to leve,
 The which now doth me soore greve. 4530
 A foolis word is nought to trowe,
 Ne worth an appel for to lowe ; ³
 Men shulde hym snybbe ⁴ bittirly,

¹ Therefore. ² Sooner. ³ Approve. ⁴ Snub

At pryme temps of his foly.

I was a fool, and she me leevede,¹

Thurgh whom I am right nought releevd.

Sheo² accomplisshid alle my wille,

That now me greveth wondir ille.

Resoun me seide what shulde falle.

A fool my-silf I may wel calle, 4540

That love a-syde I hadde not leyde,

And trowede that dame Resoun seide.

Resoun hadde bothe skile and ryght,

Whanne she me blamede, with alle hir myght,

To medle of love, that hath me shent ;

But certeyn now I wole repente:

And shulde I repente? Nay, *parde!*

A fals traitour thanne shulde I be.

The develles engynnes³ wolde me take,

If I my Love wolde forsake, 4550

Or Bialacoil falsly bitraye.

Shulde I at myscheef hate hym? Nay,

Sith he now for his curtesie

Is in prisoun of Jelousie.

Curtesie certeyn dide he me,

So mych that may not yolden⁴ be,

Whanne he the hay passen me lete,

To kisse the rose, faire and swete ;

Shulde I therfore cunne hym mawgre?

Nay, certeynly, it shal not be, 4560

For Love shalle nevere — geve Good wille⁵ —

¹ Believed. ² She. ³ Contrivances. ⁴ Required. ⁵ If (gif / God will.

Here of me, thurgh word or wille,
 Offence or complaynt more or lesse,
 Neither of Hope nor Idilnesse ;
 For certis, it were wrong that I
 Hated hem for her curtesie.
 Ther is not ellys but suffre and thenke,
 And waken whanne I shulde wynke ;¹
 Abide in hope, til Love, thurgh chaunce,
 Sende me socour or allegeaunce, 4570
 Expectant ay tille I may mete,
 To geten mercy of that swete.

Whilom I thenke how Love to me
 Seide he wolde take atte gree²
 My servise, if unpacience
 Causede me to done offence.
 He seide, " In thank I shal it take,
 And high maister eke thee make,
 If wikkednesse ne reve³ it thee ;
 But, sone, I trowe that shalle not be." 4580

These were his wordis by and by ;⁴
 It semede he lovede me trewely.
 Nor is ther not but serve hym wele,
 If that I thenke his thanke to fele.
 My good, myne harme, lyth hool in me ;
 In Love may no defaute be ;
 For trewe Love ne failide never man.
 Sothly the faute mote nedys than —
 As God forbede ! — be founde in me,
 And how it cometh, I can not see. 4590

¹ That is, sleep. ² In favor. ³ Bereave. ⁴ Exactly.

Now late it goon as it may goo ;
 Whether Love wole socoure me or sloo,¹
 He may do hool on me his wille.
 I am so sore bounde hym tille,
 From his servise I may not fleen,
 For lyf and deth, withouten wene,
 Is in his hande ; I may not chese ;
 He may me doo² bothe wyne and leese.
 And sith so sore he doth me greve,
 Yit, if my lust he wolde acheve, 4600
 To Bialacoil goodly to be,
 I geve no force what felle on me.
 For though I dye, as I mote nede,
 I praye Love, of his goodlyhede,
 To Bialacoil do gentylnesse,
 For whom I lyve in such distresse,
 That I mote deyen for penaunce.
 But first, withoute repentaunce,
 I wole me confesse in good entent,
 And make in haste my testament, 4610
 As iovers doon that feelen smerte :
 To Bialacoil leve I myne herte
 A'le hool, withoute departyng,
 Or doublenesse of repentyng.

Reason comes to the Lover

Thus as I made my passage
 In compleynt and in cruel rage,

¹ Slay. ² Cause.

And I not ¹ where to fynde a leche,²
 That couthe unto myne helpyng eche,³
 Sodeynly agayn comen doun
 Out of hir tour I saugh Resoun, 4620
 Discrete and wiis, and fulle plesaunt,
 And of hir porte fulle avenaunt.⁴
 The righte weye she tooke to me,
 Which stode in gret perplexite,
 That was posshed in every side,
 That I nyste where I myght abide,
 Tille she demurely sad of chere
 Seide to me as she come nere :

“ Myne owne freend, art thou yit greved ?
 How is this quarelle yit acheved 4630
 Of Loves side ? Anoon me telle,
 Hast thou not yit of love thi fille ?
 Art thou not wery of thy servise
 That the hath in siche wise ?
 What joye hast thou in thy lovyng ?
 Is it swete or bitter thyng ?
 Canst thou yit chese, late me see,
 What best thi socour myghte be ?

“ Thou servest a fulle noble lorde,
 That maketh thee thralle for thi rewarde, 4640
 Which ay renewith thi turment,
 With foly so he hath thee blent ;⁵
 Thou felle in myscheef thilke day,
 Whanne thou didist, the sothe to say,
 Obeysaunce and eke homage,

¹ Know not. ² Physician. ³ Add. ⁴ Graceful. ⁵ Duped.

Thou wroughtest no thyng as the sage.
 Whanne thou bicam his liege man,
 Thou didist a gret foly than ;
 Thou wistest not what felle therto,
 With what lord thou haddist to do. 4650
 If thou haddist hym wel knowe
 Thou haddist nought be brought so lowe ;
 For if thou wistest what it were,
 Thou noldist serve hym half a yeer,
 Not a weke, nor half a day,
 Ne yit an hour withoute delay,
 Ne never ilovede paramours,
 His lordshippe is so fulle of shoures.
 Knowest hym ought ? " 4659

Lamaunt. "Yhe, dame, *parde !*"

Raisoun. "Nay, nay."

Lamaunt. "Yhis, I."

Raisoun. "Wherof, late se ?"

Lamaunt. "Of that he seide I shulde be
 Glad to have sich lord as he,
 And maister of sich seignorie."

Raisoun. "Knowist hym no more ?"

Lamaunt. "Nay, certis, I,
 Save that he gaf me rewles there,
 And wente his wey, I nyste where,
 And I aboode bounde in balaunce." ¹ 4670

Raisoun. "Lo, there a noble conisaunce ! ²
 But I wille that thou knowe hym now
 Gynnyng and eende, sith that thou

¹ Doubt. ² Acquaintance.

Art so anguiss hous and mate,¹
 Disfigured oute of a-state ;
 Ther may no wrecche have more of woo,
 Ne caityfe noon enduren soo.
 It were to every man sitting,²
 Of his lord have knowleching.
 For if thou knewe hym, oute of doute, 4680
 Lightly thou shulde escapen oute
 Of the prisoun that marreth thee."

Lamaunt. "Yhe, dame ! sith my lord is he,
 And I his man maad with myn honde,³
 I wolde right fayne undirstonde
 To knowe of what kynde he be
 If ony wolde informe me."

Raisoun. "I wolde," seide Resoun, "thee
 here,
 Sith thou to lerne hast sich desire,
 And shewe thee withouten fable 4690
 A thyng that is not demonstrable.
 Thou shalt [lernen] without science,
 And knowe, withouten experience,
 The thyng that may not known be,
 Ne wist ne shewid in no degre.

"Thou maist the sothe of it not witen,
 Though in thee it were witen.
 Thou shalt not knowe therof more,
 While thou art reuled by his lore,
 But unto hym that love wole flee, 4700
 The knotte may unclosed bee,

¹ Dejected. ² Becoming. ³ In doing homage.

Which hath to thee, as it is founde,
So long be knette and not unbounde.
Now sette wel thyne entencioun,
To here of love discripcioun.

“Love it is an hatefulle pees,
A free acquitaunce withoute relees,
A trouthe frette ¹ fulle of falsheede,
A sikernes alle sette in drede,
In herte is a dispeiryng hope, 4710
And fulle of hope it is wanhope,
Wise woodnesse, and wode resoun,
A swete perelle in to droune,
An hevy birthen lyght to bere,
A wikked wawe away to were.

“It is Karibdous perilous,
Disagreable and gracious.
It is discordaunce that can accorde,
And accordaunce to discorde.
It is kunnyng withoute science, 4720
Wisdom withoute sapience,
Witte withoute discrecioun,
Havoir ² withoute possessioun.
It is sike hele and hool sekenesse,
A thrust ³ drowned in dronknesse,
And helth fulle of maladie,
And charite fulle of envie,
And anger fulle of habundaunce,
And a gredy suffisaunce ;
Delite right fulle of hevynesse, 4730

¹ Adorned. ² French *avoir*, to have ³ Thirst

And drierihed ¹ fulle of gladnesse ;
 Bitter swetnesse and swete errour,
 Right evelle savoured good savour ;
 Sin that pardoun hath withynne,
 And pardoun spotted withoute with synne ;
 A peyne also it is joious,
 And felonye right pitous ;
 Also pley that selde is stable,
 And stedefast right mevable ;
 A strengthe weyked ² to stonde upright, 4740
 And feblenesse fulle of myght ;
 Witte unavised, sage folie,
 And joie fulle of turmentrie ;
 A laughter it is weping ay,
 Reste that traveyleth nyght and day ;
 Also a swete helle it is,
 And a sorouffulle Paradys ;
 A plesaunt gayl ³ and esy prisoun,
 And fulle of froste somer sesoun ;
 Pryme temps ⁴ fulle of frostes white, 4750
 And May devoide of al delite ;
 With seer braunches, blossoms ungrene,
 And newe fruyt fillid with wynter tene.⁵
 It is a slowe ⁶ may not for-bere
 Ragges ribaned, with gold, to were ;
 For also welle wole love be sette
 Under ragges as riche rochette ;⁷
 And eke as wel be amourettes ⁸

¹ Dreariness. ² Weakened. ³ Jail. ⁴ Spring (Fr. *printemps*)
 Grief. ⁵ Moth. ⁷ Frock. ⁸ Sweethearts.

In mournyng blak, as bright burnettes.¹
 For noon is of so mochel pris, 4760
 Ne no man founden is so wys,
 Ne noon so high is of parage,²
 Ne no man founde of witt so sage ;
 No man so hardy ne so wight,
 Ne no man of so mychel myght ;
 Noon so fulfilled of bounte,³
 That he with love may daunted be.
 Alle the world holdith this way ;
 Love makith alle to goon myswey,
 But it be they of yvel lyf, 4770
 Whom genius cursith, man and wyf,
 That wrongly werke ageyn nature.
 Noon such I love, ne have no cure
 Of sich as loves servauntes bene,
 And wole not by my counsel flene.⁴
 For I ne preise that lovyng
 Wherthurgh men, at the laste eendyng,
 Shalle calle hem wrecchis fulle of woo,
 Love greveth hem and shendith soo.
 But if thou wolt wel love eschewe, 4780
 For to escape out of his mewe,⁵
 And make al hool thi sorwe to slake,
 No bettir counsel maist thou take,
 Than thynke to fleen ; wel iwis,
 May nought helpe elles ; for wite thou this, —
 If thou fle it, it shal flee thee ;
 Folowe it, and folowen shal it thee.”

¹ Fine brown cloths.
 Place of confinement.

² Parentage.

³ Goodness.

⁴ Escape.

Lamant. Whanne I hadde herde alle Re-
soun seyne,

Which hadde spilt hir speche in veyne,
 "Dame," seide I, "I dar wel sey, 4790
 Of this avaunt¹ me wel I may
 That from youre scole so devyaunt²
 I am, that never the more avaunt³
 Right nought am I thurgh youre doctrine ;
 I dulle under youre discipline ;
 I wote no more than I wist ever,
 To me so contrarie and so fer
 Is every thing that ye me lere ;
 And yit I can it alle parcuere.⁴
 Myne herte forgetith therof right nought, 4800
 It is so writen in my thought ;
 And depe graven it is so tendir
 That alle by herte I can it rendre,
 And rede it over comunely ;
 But to my silf lewedist⁵ am I.

"But sith ye love discreven⁶ so,
 And lak⁷ and preise it bothe twoo,
 Defyneth it into this letter,
 That I may thenke on it the better,
 For I herde never diffyned heere, 4810
 And wilfully I wolde it lere."

Raisoun. "If love be serched wel and sought
 It is a sykenesse of the thought
 Annexed and kned⁸ bitwixt tweyne,

¹ Boast. ² Deviating. ³ Advanced. ⁴ Go over. ⁵ Most igno-
rant. ⁶ Describe. ⁷ Depreciate. ⁸ Knit.

With male and female, with oo cheyne,
 So frely that byndith, that they nylle twynne,
 Whether so therof they leese or wynne.
 The roote springith thurgh hoothe brennyng
 Into disordinat desiryng,
 For to kissen and embrace 4820
 And at her lust hem to solace.

“Of other thyng love recchith ¹ nought,
 But setteth her herte and alle her thought
 More for delectacioun
 Than ony procreacioun
 Of other fruyt by engendrure ;
 Which love to God is not plesyng ;
 For of her body fruyt to gete
 They geve no force, they are so sette
 Upon delite to pley in feere.² 4830

“And somme have also this manere,
 To feynen hem for love seke ;
 Sich love I preise not at a leke.³
 For paramours they do but feyne ;
 To love truly they disdeyne.
 They falsen ⁴ ladies traitoursly,
 And swerne hem othes utterly,
 With many a lesyng, and many a fable,
 And alle they fynden deceyvable.
 And whanne they han her luste geten 4840
 The hoothe ernes ⁵ they al forgeten.

“Wymmen the harne they bien fulle sore ;
 But men this thenken evermore,

¹ Recketh. ² Together. ³ Leek ⁴ Deceive. ⁵ Zeal.

That lasse harme is, so mote I the,
 Deceyve hem, than deceyved be ;
 And namely where they ne may
 Fynde none other mene wey.

For I wote wel, in sothfastnesse,
 That who doth now his bisynesse
 With ony womman for to dele,
 For ony lust that he may fele,
 But if it be for engendrure,
 He doth trespasse, I you ensure.
 For he shulde setten alle his wille
 To geten a likly thyng hym tille,
 And to sustene, if he myghte,
 And kepe forth, by Kyndes righte,
 His own lyknesse and semblable.

485c

“ For because alle is corumpable,
 And faile shulde successioun,
 Ne were their generacioun,
 Oure sectis strene¹ for to save,
 Whanne fader or moder arn in grave,
 Her children shulde, whanne they ben deede,
 Fulle diligent ben, in her steede,
 To use that werke on such a wise,
 That oon may thurgh another rise.
 Therfore sette Kynde therynne delite,
 For men therynne shulde hem delite,
 And of that deede be not erke,²
 But ofte sithes haunte that werke.
 For noon wolde drawe therof a draught
 Ne were delite, which hath hym kaught.

486a

487a

¹ Race's strain, stock (O E. *stryman*, to procreate). ² Weary.

"This hadde sotille dame Nature ;
 For noon goth right, I thee ensure,
 Ne hath entent hool ne parfight,
 For hir desir is for delyte,
 The which fortene¹ crece¹ and eke
 The pley of love, for-ofte seke,
 And thralle hem-silf they be so nyce 4880
 Unto the prince of every vice ;
 For of ech synne it is the rote,
 Unlefulle² lust, though it be sote,
 And of alle yvelle the racyne,³
 As Tullius⁴ can determyne,
 Which in his tyme was fulle sage,
 In a boke he made of Age,
 Where that more he preyseth Eelde⁵
 Though he be croked and unweelde,⁶
 And more of commendacioun, 4890
 Than youthe in his discripcioun.

"For youthe sette bothe man and wyf
 In alle perelle of soule and lyf ;
 And perelle is, but men have grace,
 The perelle of youghth for to pace,⁷
 Withoute ony deth or distresse,
 It is so fulle of wyldenesse ;
 So ofte it doth shame or damage
 To hym or to his lynage.
 It ledith man now up, now down, 4900
 In mochel dissolucioun,

¹ Chanced increase. ² Illicit. Root. ⁴ Cicero, in *De Senectute*
 Age. ⁶ Impotent. ⁷ Pass.

And makith hym love yvelle companye,
 And lede his lyf disrewlilye,¹
 And halt hym payed² with noon estate.

“Withynne hym-silf is such debate,
 He chaungith purpos and entente,
 And yalte³ into somme covente,
 To lyven aftir her emprise,
 And lesith fredom and fraunchise,
 That Nature in hym hadde sette,
 The which ageyne he may not gette,
 If he there make his mansioun⁴
 For to abide professioun.⁵

Though for a tyme his herte absente,
 It may not fayle, he shal repente,
 And eke abide thilke day,
 To leve his abite,⁶ and gone his way,
 And lesith his worshippe and his name,
 And dar not come ageyn for shame,
 But al his lyf he doth so morne,
 By-cause he dar not hom retourne.
 Fredom of kynde so lost hath he
 That never may recured be,
 But if that God hym graunte grace
 That he may, er he hennes pace.
 Conteyne undir obedience
 Thurgh the vertu of pacience.
 For youthe sette man in alle folye,
 In unthrift and ribaudie,

49 •

4920

¹ Without rule. ² Satisfied. ³ Yieldeth (himself). ⁴ Abiding place. ⁵ His vows. ⁶ Habit.

In leccherie, and in outrage, 4930

So ofte it chaungith of corage.¹

Youthe gynneth ofte sich bargeyne,

That may not eende withōuten peyne

In gret perelle is sett youthede,

Delite so doth his bridil leede.

Delite thus hangith, drede thee nought,

Bothe mannys body and his thought,

Oonly thurgh youthes chamberere,

That to done yvelle is custommere,

And of nought elles taketh hede, 4940

But oonly folkes for to lede

Into disporte and wyldenesse,

So is he forward from sadnesse.²

But Eelde drawith hem therfro ;

Who wote it nought he may wel goo,

And moo of hem that now arn olde,

That whilom youthe hadde in holde,

Which yit remembreth of tendir age

Hou it hem brought in many a rage,

And many a foly therynne wrought. 4950

But now that Eelde hath hym thurgh sought

'They repente hem of her folye,

That youthe hem putte in jupardye,

In perelle and in myche woo,

And made hem ofte amys to do.

And suen³ yvelle companye

Riot and avoutrie.⁴

“ But Eelde gan ageyn restreyne

¹ Inclination. ² Seriousness. ³ Pursue. ⁴ Adultery

From sicke folly, and refreyne,¹
 And sette men, by her ordinaunce, 4960
 In good reule and governaunce.

But yvelle she spendith hir servise,
 For no man wole hir love, neither preise ;
 She is i-hated, this wote I welle.

Hir acqweyntaunce wolde no man fele,
 Ne han of Elde companye,
 Men hate to be of hir alye ;

For no man wolde bicomen olde,
 Ne dye, whanne he is yong and bolde,
 “ And Eelde merveilith right gretlye, 4970

Whanne thei remembre hem inwardly
 Of many a perelous emprise,
 Whiche that they wrought in sondry wise,
 Hou evere they myght, withoute blame,
 Escape away withoute shame,
 In youthe withoute damage
 Or reproof of her lynage,
 Losse of membre, shedyng of blode,
 Perelle of deth, and losse of good.

“ Woste thou nought where Youthe abit,²
 That men so preisen in her witt? 4980

With Delite she halt³ sojour,
 For bothe they dwellen in oo tour.
 As longe as Youthe is in sesoun,
 They dwellen in oon mansioun.
 Delite of Youthe wole have servise
 To do what so he wole devise ;

¹ Hold back (Lat. *frenum*, a bridle). ² Abideth. ³ Holdeth.

And Youthe is redy evermore
 For to obey, for smerte of sore,
 Unto Delite, and hym to geve 4990
 Hir servise, while that she may lyve.

“Where Elde abit, I wole thee telle
 Shortely, and no while dwelle,
 For thidir byhoveth thee to goo.
 If Deth in youthe thee not sloo,¹
 Of this journey thou maist not faile.
 With hir Labour and Travaile
 Logged ben with Sorwe and Woo,
 That never out of hir court goo.
 Peyne and Distresse, Syknesse, and Ire, 5000
 And Malencoly, that angry sire,
 Ben of hir paleys senatours.
 Gronyng and Grucchyng, hir herbejours,²
 The day and nyght, hir to turmente,
 With cruelle Deth they hir presente.
 And tellen hir, erliche and late,
 That Deth stondith armed at hir gate.

“Thanne brynge they to her remembraunce
 The foly dedis of hir infaunce,
 Whiche causen hir to mourne in woo 5010
 That Youthe hath hir bigiled so,
 Which sodeynly away is hasted.
 She wepeth the tyme that she hath wasted,
 Compleynyng of the preterit,
 And the present, that not abit,
 And of hir olde vanite,

¹ Slav. ² Lodging-providers.

That but aforñ hir she may see
 In the future somme socour,
 To leggen¹ hir of hir dolour,
 To graunte hir tyme of repentaunce, 5020
 For her synnes to do penaunce,
 And atte the laste so hir governe
 To wyne the joy that is eterne,
 Fro which go bakward Youthe he made
 In vanite to droune and wade.
 For present tyme abidith nought,
 It is more swift than any thought ;
 So litel while it doth endure
 That ther nys compte ne mesure.

“ But hou that evere the game go 5030
 Who list to love joie and mirth also
 Of love, be it he or she,
 High or lowe who it be,
 In fruyt² they shulde hem delyte,
 Her part they may not elles quyte,
 To save hem-silf in honeste.³

“ And yit fulle many one I se
 Of wymmen, sothly for to seyne,
 That desire and wolde fayne
 The pley of love, they be so wilde ; 5040
 And not coveite to go with childe.
 And if with child they be perchaunce,
 They wole it holde a gret myschaunce,
 But what-som-ever woo they fele,
 They wole not pleyne, but concele ;

¹ Alleviate. ² Offspring. ³ Virtue.

But if it be ony fool or nyce,
In whom that shame hath no justice.

"For to delyte echone they drawe,
That haunte this werk. both high and lawe,
Save siche that arn worth right nought, 5050
That for money wole be bought.

Such love I preise in no wise,
Whanne it is goven for coveitise.
I preise no womman, though so¹ be wood,
That geveth hir-silf for ony good.

For litel shulde a man telle²
Of hir, that wole hir body selle,
Be she mayde, be she wyf,
That quyk wole selle hir bi hir lyf.

Hou faire chere that evere she make, 5060
He is a wrecche, I undirtake,
That lovede such one, for swete or soure,
Though she hym calle hir paramoure,
And laugheth on hym, and makith hym feeste.

For certeynly no such beeste
To be loved is not worthy,
Or bere the name of drurie.³
Noon shulde hir please, but he were woode,
That wole dispoile hym of his goode.

"Yit nevertheles I wole not sey 5070
That she, for solace and for pley,
May a jewel or other thyng
Take of her loves fre gevyng;
But that she aske it in no wise,

¹ She ² Count (tally). ³ Mis:ress (literally, gallantry).

For drede of shame or coveitise.
 And she of hirs may hym, certeyn,
 Withoute sclaundre, geven ageyn,
 And joyne her hertes to-gidre so
 In love, and take and geve also.

“Trowe not that I wolde hem twynne, 508c
 Whanne in her love ther is no synne ;
 I wole that they to-gedre go,
 And don al that they han ado,
 As certeis shulde and debonaire,
 And in her love beren hem faire,
 Withoute vice, bothe he and she ;
 So that al-wey in honeste,
 Fro foly love to kepe hem clere
 That brenneth hertis with his fere ;
 And that her love, in ony wise, 509a
 Be devoide of coveitise.
 Good love shulde engendrid be
 Of trewe herte, just, and secre,
 And not of such as sette her thought
 To have her lust, and ellis nought,
 So are they caught in Loves lace,
 Truly, for bodily solace.

“Fleshly delite is so present
 With thee, that sette alle thyne entent,
 Withoute more, — what shulde I glose? — 51a
 For to gete and have the rose,
 Which makith thee so mate and woode
 That thou desirest noon other goode.
 But thou art not an inche the nerre,

But evere abidist in sorwe and werre,
 As in thi face it is i-sene ;
 It makith thee bothe pale and lene,
 Thy myght, thi vertu goth away.
 A sory geste in goode fay,
 Thou herberest ¹ hem in thyne inne, 5110
 The god of Love whanne thou let inne !
 Wherefore I rede thou shette hym oute,
 Or he shalle greve thee, oute of doute ;
 For to thi profit it wole turne,
 Iff he nomore with thee sojourne.
 In gret myscheef and sorwe sonken
 Ben hertis, that of love are dronken,
 As thou peraventure knowen shalle.
 Whanne thou hast lost the tyme alle,
 And spent thy thought in ydilnesse, 5120
 In waste, and wofulle lustynesse ;
 If thou maist lyve the tyme to se
 Of love for to delyvered be,
 Thy tyme thou shalt biwepe sore
 The whiche never thou maist restore.

“For tyme lost, as men may see,
 For no thyng may recured ² be.
 And if thou scape, yit atte laste,
 Fro Love that hath thee so faste
 Y-knytt and bounden in his lace,³ 5130
 Certeyn I holde it but a grace.
 For many oon, as it is seyne,
 Have lost, and spent also in veyne,

¹ Lodgest. ² Recovered. ³ Snare.

In his servise withoute socour,
 Body and soule, good and tresour,
 Witte and strengthe, and eke richesse,
 Of which they hadde never redresse.”

Lamant. Thus taught and preched hath Resoun,

But Love spilte ¹ hir sermoun,
 That was so ymped ² in my thought, 5140
 That hir doctrine I sette at nought.
 And yitt ne seide she never a dele,
 That I ne undirstode it wele,
 Word by word the mater alle.
 But unto Love I was so thralle,
 Which callith over alle his pray,
 And chasith so my thoughte ay,
 And holdith myne herte undir his sele,
 As trust and trew as ony stele ;
 So that [right] no devocioun 5150
 Ne hadde I in the sermoun
 Of dame Resoun ; ne of hir rede ³
 I toke no sojour ⁴ in myne hede.
 For alle gede oute at oon ere
 That in that other she dide lere ;
 Fully on me she lost hir lore.

Hir speche me grevede wondir sore,
 That unto hir for ire I seide,
 For anger, as I dide abraide,
 “ Dame, and is it youre wille algate, 5160
 That I not love, but that I hate

¹ Ruined. ² Grafted. ³ Counsel. ⁴ Sojourn.

Alle men, as ye me teche?
 For if I do aftir youre speche,
 Sith that ye seyne love is not good,
 Thanne must I nedis say with mood¹
 If I it leve, in hatrede ay
 Lyven, and voide love away
 From me, a synfulle wrecche,
 Hated of alle that tecche.²

I may not go noon other gate,
 For other must I love or hate.
 And if I hate men of newe,
 More than love it wole me rewe,
 As by youre preching semeth me,
 For Love no thing ne preisith thee.

5170

"Ye geve good counsel, sikirly,
 That prechith me al day, that I
 Shulde not Loves lore alowe;³
 He were a foole wolde you not trowe!
 In speche also ye han me taught
 Another love that knowen is naught,
 Which I have herd you not reprove,
 To love ech other, by youre leve.
 If ye wolde diffyne it me,
 I wolde gladly here, to se,
 Atte the leest, if I may lere
 Of sondry loves the manere."

5180

Raisoun. "Certis, freend, a fool art thou
 Whan that thou no thyng wolt allowe,

¹ Anger. ² This passage is corrupt. The original reads "*pire que lierres*," worse than ivy plants. Ivy was sacred to Bacchus. "Tecche" may mean "teach," however. ³ Praise.

That I for thi profit say. 5190
 Yit wole I sey thee more, in fay,¹
 For I am redy, at the leste,
 To accomplisshe thi requeste,
 But I not where² it wole awayle ;
 In veyn perauntre I shal travayle.

“ Love ther is in sondry wise,
 As I shal thee heere devise.
 For somme love leful is and good ;
 I mene not that which makith thee wood,
 And bringith thee in many a fitte, 5200
 And ravysshith fro thee al thi witte,
 It is so merveilouse and queynte ;
 With such love be no more aqueynte.”

Reason defines Friendship.

“ Love of freendshippe also ther is,
 Which makith no man done amys,
 Of wille knytt bitwixe two,
 That wole not breke for wele ne woo ;
 Which long is likly to contune.³
 Whanne wille and goodis ben in comune,
 Grounded by Goddis ordinaunce, 5210
 Hoole withoute discordaunce ;
 With hem holdyng comune⁴
 Of alle her goode in charite,
 That ther be noon excepcioun,
 Thurgh chaungyng of entencioun,

¹ Faith. ² Know not whether. ³ Continue. ⁴ Community.

That ech helpe other at her neede,
 And wisely hele¹ bothe word and dede
 Trewe of menyng, devoide of slouthe,
 For witt is nought withoute trouthe ;
 So that the ton² dar alle his thought 5220
 Seyn to his freend, and spare nought,
 As to hym-silf withoute dredyng
 To be discovered by wreying.³

"For glad is that conjunccioun,
 Whanne ther is noon susspecioun,
 [That] they wolde [evere false] prove
 That trewe and parfit weren in love.⁴
 For no man may be amyable,⁵
 But-if he be so ferme and stable,
 That fortune chaunge hym not, ne blynde,⁶
 But that his freend alle wey hym fynde, 5231
 Bothe pore and riche, in oo state.
 For if his freend, thurgh ony gate,
 Wole compleyne of his poverté,
 He shulde not bide so long, til he
 Of his helpyng hym requere ;
 For goode dede done thurgh praieré
 Is sold, and bought to deere iwys,
 To herte that of grete valour is.
 For herte fulfilled of gentilnesse, 5240
 Can yvel demene his distresse.
 And man that worthy is of name,
 To asken often hath gret shame.

¹ Hide. ² The 'one. ³ Betraying. ⁴ The text is evidently corrupt. ⁵ Lovable. ⁶ Warp.

"A good man brenneth in his thought
 For shame, whanne he axeth ought.
 He hath gret thought, and dredeth ay
 For his disese,¹ whanne he shal pray
 His freend, lest that he warned ² be,
 Til that he preve his stabilte.
 But whanne that he hath founden oon 5250
 That trusty is and trewe as stone,
 And assaied hym at alle,
 And founde hym stedefast as a walle,
 And of his freendshippe be certeyne,
 He shal hym shewe bothe joye and peyne,
 And alle that he dar thynke or sey,
 Withoute shame, as he wel may.
 For how shulde he a-shamed be,
 Of sich one as I tolde thee?
 For whanne he woot his secre thought, 5260
 The thridde shal knowe therof right nought;
 For tweyne of noumbre is bet than thre,
 In every counselle and secre.

"Repreve he dredde never a deele,
 Who that bisett³ his wordis wele;
 For every wise man, out of drede,
 Can kepe his tunge til he se nede;
 And fooles can not holde her tunge, —
 A fooles belle is soone runge.'

"Yit shal a trewe freend do more 5270
 To helpe his felowe of his sore,
 And socoure hym, whanne he hath neede,

¹ Discomfort. ² Refused. ³ Employs.

In alle that he may done in deede ;
 And gladder that he hym plesith
 Than his felowe that he esith.
 And if he do not his requeste,
 He shal as mochel hym moleste
 As his fellow, for that he
 May not fulfille his volunte
 Fully, as he hath requered.

5280

“ If bothe the hertis Love hath fered,¹
 Joy and woo tney shulle departe,²
 And take evenly ech his parte.
 Half his anoy he shal have ay,
 And comfort, what that he may ;
 And of this blisse parte shal he,
 If love wole departed be.

“ And whilom of this unyte
 Spake Tullius ³ in a ditee ;
 And shulde maken his requeste
 Unto his freend, that is honeste ;
 And he goodly shulde it fulfille,
 But it the more were out of skile,⁴
 And other-wise not graunte therto,
 Except oonly in cause twoo.
 If men his freend to deth wolde drife,
 Late hym be bisy to save his lyve.
 Also if men wolen hym assayle,
 Of his wurshippe to make hym faile,
 And hyndren hym of his renoun,
 Late hym, with fulle entencioun,

5290

5300

¹ Fired. ² Divide Cicero, *De Amicitia*. ⁴ Reason.

His dever¹ done in eche degre
 That his freend ne i-shamed be,
 In this two caas with his myght,
 Taking no kepe to skile nor right,
 As ferre as love may hym excuse ;
 This oughte no man to refuse.
 This love that I have tolde to thee
 Is no thing contrarie to me ;
 This wole I that thou folowe wele,
 And leve the tother everydele.
 This love to vertu alle entendith,
 The tothir fooles blent and shendith.²

531^o

“ Another love also there is,
 That is contrarie unto this,
 Which desire is so constreyned
 That it is but wille feyned :
 Away fro trouthe it doth so varie
 That to good love it is contrarie ;
 For it maymeth, in many wise,
 Sike hertis with coveitise ;
 Alle in wynnyng and in profit,
 Sich love settith his delite.

532^o

“ This love so hangeth in balaunce
 That if it lese his hope, perchaunce,
 Of lucre, that he is sett upon,
 It wole faile, and quenche anoon ;
 For no man may be ameraus,
 Ne in his lyvyng vertuous,
 But he love more, in moode,

533^o

¹ Duty (Fr. *devoir*). ² Deceiveth and ruineth.

Men for hem-silf than for her goode.
 For love that profit doth abide
 Is fals, and bit ¹ not in no tyde.

“ Love cometh of dame Fortune,
 That litel while wole contune,
 For it shal chaungen wonder soone,
 And take eclips right as the moone,
 Whanne he is from us i-lett
 Thurgh erthe, that bitwixe is sett
 The sonne and hir, as it may falle, 5340
 Be it in partie, or in alle ;
 The shadowe maketh her bemys merke,²
 And hir hornes to shewe derke,
 That part where she hath lost hir lyght
 Of Phebus fully, and the sight ;
 Til whanne the shadowe is overpaste,
 She is enlumyned ageyn as faste,
 Thurgh the brightnesse of the sonne bemes
 That geveth to hir ageyne hir lemes.³

“ That love is right of sich nature ; 5350
 Now is faire, and now obscure,
 Now bright, now clipsi of manere,
 And whilom dymme, and whilom clere.
 As soone as Poverté gynneth take,
 With mantel and with wedis ⁴ blake
 Hidith of Love the light away,
 That into nyght it turneth day ;
 It may not see Richesse shyne,
 Tille the blake shadowes fyne.⁵

¹ Abideth ² Murky. ³ Gleams. ⁴ Carments. ⁵ End.

For, whanne Richesse shyneth brighte, 536a
 Love recovereth ageyn his lighte ;
 And whanne it failith, he wole flitte,
 And as she greveth, so greveth itte.

“ Of this love here what I sey :

The riche men are loved ay,
 And namely tho that sparand bene,
 That wole not wasshe her hertes clene
 Of the filthe, nor of the vice
 Of gredy brennyng avarice.

The riche man fulle fonned ¹ is, y-wys, 537a

That weneth that he loved is.

If that his herte it undirstode,

It is not he ; it is his goode.

He may wel witen in his thought,

His good is loved, and he right nought,

For if he be a nygard eke,

Men wole not sette by hym a leke,

But haten hym ; this is the sothe.

“ Lo, what profit this catell ² doth !

Of every man that may hym see, 538a

It geteth hym nought but enmyte.

But ³ he amende hym-silf of that vice,

And knowe hym-silf, he is not wys.

Certys he shulde ay freendly be,

To gete hym love also ben free,

Or ellis he is not wise ne sage

No more than is a gote ramage.⁴

“ That he not loveth his dede proveth,

¹ Fond (foolish). ² Chattels. ³ Except. ⁴ Wild goat

Whan he his richesse so wel loveth,
 That he wole hide it ay, and spare, 5390
 His pore freendis sene forfare,¹
 To kepen ay his purpose,
 Til for drede his iyen close,
 And til a wikked deth hym take ;
 Hym hadde lever a-sondre shake,
 And late alle hise lymes a-sondre ryve,
 Than leve his richesse in his lyve.
 He thenkith parte it with no man ;
 Certayn no love is in hym than.
 How shulde love withynne hym be, 5400
 Whanne in his herte is no pite ?
 That he trespasseth wel I wote,
 For ech man knowith his estate ;
 For wel hym ought to be reprovèd
 That loveth nought, ne is not loved.

“ But sen we arn to Fortune comen,
 And hath oure sermoun of hir nomen,²
 A wondir wille I telle thee nowè,
 Thou herdist never sich oon, I trowe.
 I note where thou me leven³ shalle, 5410
 Though sothfastnesse it be in alle,
 As it is writen, and is soth,
 That unto men more profit doth
 The froward Fortune and contraire,
 Than the swote and debonaire.
 And if thee thynke it is doutable,
 It is thurgh argument provable.

¹ Perish. ² Taken. ³ Believe.

“ For the debonaire and softe
 Falsith and bigilith ofte ;
 For lyche a moder she can cherishe 542c
 And mylken as doth a norys,¹
 And of hir goode to hym deles
 And geveth hym part of her joweles,
 With grete richesse and dignite,
 And hem she hoteth² stabilite,
 In a state that is not stable,
 But chaungynge ay and variable ;
 And fedith hym with glorie veyne,
 And worldly blisse non certeyne.
 Whanne she hym settith on hir whele, 543c
 Thanne wene they to be right wele,
 And in so stable state with-alle,
 That never they wene for to falle.

“ And whanne they sette so highe be,
 They wene to have in certeynte
 Of hertly freendis so grete noumbre,
 That no thyng myght her state encombre ;
 They trust hem so on every side,
 Wenying with hym they wolde abide,
 In every perelle and myschaunce, 544c
 Without chaunge or variaunce,
 Bothe of catelle and of goode ;
 And also for to spende her bloode,
 And alle her membris for to spille,
 Oonly to fulfille her wille.

“ They maken [hem lordes] in many wise,

¹ Nurse. ² Promiseth.

And hoten ¹ hem her fulle servise,
 How sore that it do hem smerte ;
 Into her veray naked sherte,
 Herte and alle, so hold they geve, 545^o
 For the tyme that they may lyve,
 So that with her flaterie,
 They maken foolis glorifie
 Of her wordis spekyng,
 And han cheer of a rejoysyng,
 And trowe hem as the evangile ;
 And it is alle falsheede and gile,
 As they shal aftirwardes se,
 Whanne they arn falle in poverte,
 And ben of good and catelle bare ; 546^c
 Thanne shulde they sene who freendis ware.

“ For of an hundred certeynly,
 Nor of a thousande fulle scarsly,
 Ne shal they fynde unnethis oon
 Whanne poverte is comen upon.
 For thus Fortune that I of telle,
 With men whanne hir lust to dwelle,
 Makith men to leese her conisaunce,
 And norishith hem in ignoraunce.

“ But froward Fortune and perverse, 547^o
 Whanne high estatis she doth reverse,
 And maketh hem to tumble doune
 Of with ² hir whele, with sodeyn tourne,
 And from her Richesse doth hem fle,
 And plongeth hem in poverte,

¹ Promise. ² That is, off from.

As a stepmoder envyous,
 And leieth a plastre doiorous
 Unto her hertis wounded egre,¹
 Which is not tempred with vynesgre,
 But with poverte and indigence, 5480
 For to shewe by experience
 That she is Fortune verelye,
 In whom no man shulde affye,²
 Nor in hir geftis have fiaunce,²
 She is so fulle of variaunce.

“ Thus kan she maken high and lowe,
 Whanne they from richesse arn i-throwe,
 Fully to knowen, withoute were,³
 Freend of affect,⁴ and freend of chere ;⁵
 And which in love weren trewe and stable, 5490
 And whiche also weren variable,
 After Fortune her goddesse,
 In poverte, outhur in richesse ;
 For alle that geveth here out of drede,
 Unhappy bereveth it in dede ;
 For In-fortune late⁶ not oon
 Of freendis, whanne Fortune is gone ;
 I mene tho freendis that wole fle
 Anoon as entreth poverte.

“ And yit they wole not leve hem so, 5500
 But in ech place where they go
 They calle hem ‘ wrecche,’ scorne and blame,
 And of her myshappe hem diffame,

¹ Sharp (biting). ² Trust. ³ Doubt. ⁴ Reality. ⁵ Appearance
Cf. Visage sanz Peinture, l. 34. ⁶ Leaves.

And namely sicke as in richesse
 Pretendith moost of stablenesse,
 Whanne that they sawe hym sett on-lofte,
 And weren of hym socoured ofte,
 And most i-holpe in alle her neede:
 But now they take no maner heede,
 But seyn in voice of flaterie, 5510
 That now apperith her folye,
 Over-alle where so they fare,
 And synge, 'Go, fare-wel feldefare.'¹
 Alle suche freendis I beshrewe,
 For of trewe ther be to fewe.

"But sothfaste freendis, what-so bitide,
 In every fortune wolen abide;
 Thei han her hertis in suche noblesse
 That they nyl love for no richesse,
 Nor for that Fortune may hem sende 5520
 Thei wolen hem socoure and defende,
 And chaunge for softe ne for sore.
 For who his freend loveth evermore
 Though men drawe swerde his freend to slo,
 He may not hewe her love a-two.
 But in case that I shalle sey,
 For pride and ire lese it he may,
 And for reprove by nycete,
 And discovering of privite,
 With tonge woundyng, as feloun, 5530
 Thurgh venemous detraccioun.

¹ Cf. *Troilus and Cryseyde*, iii. 861. The fieldfare, a kind of thrush, appears and disappears suddenly.

Frende in this case wole gone his way,
 For no thyng greve hym more ne may,
 And for nought ellis wole he fle,
 If that he love in stabilite.

And certeyn he is wel bigone¹
 Among a thousand that fyndith oon.
 For ther ne may be no richesse
 Ageyns frendshipp of worthynesse,
 For it ne may so high atteigne,
 As may the valoure,² soth to seyne,
 Of hym that loveth trew and welle;
 Frendshipp is more than is catelle.

554c

“For freend in court ay better is
 Than peny in purs,³ certis;
 And Fortune myshappyng,
 Whanne upon men she is fablyng,
 Thurgh mysturnyng of hir chaunce,
 And caste hem oute of balaunce,
 She makith, thurgh hir adversite,
 Men fulle clerly for to se
 Hym that is freend in existence
 From hym that is by apparence.”⁴

555o

For Yn-fortune makith anoon
 To knowe thy freendis fro thy foon,
 By experience, right as it is.
 The which is more to preise, ywis,
 Than in myche richesse and tresour,
 For more depe profit and valour,

¹ In a good way. ² Value (Fr. *valeur*). ³ Cf. 2 *King Henry IV.* act 5, sc. 1, l. 32. ⁴ Cf. l. 5489

Povertē, and such adversite 5560
 Bifore, than doth prosperite ;
 For the toon geveth conysaunce,
 And the tother ignoraunce.

“ And thus in povertē is in dede
 Trouthe declared fro falseheed,
 For feynte ¹ frendis it wole declare,
 And trewe also, what wey they fare.
 For whanne he was in his richesse,
 These freendis, ful of doublenesse,
 Offrid hym in many wise 5570
 Hert and body, and servise.

“ What wolde he thanne ha gove ² to ha bought
 To knowen openly her thought,
 That he now hath so clerly seen ?
 The lasse bigiled she shulde have bene
 And he hadde thanne perceyved it,
 But richesse nolde not late hym witte.³
 Wel more avauntage doth hym thanne,
 Sith that it makith hym a wise man,
 The grete myscheef that he perceyveth, 5580
 Than doth richesse that hym deceyveth.
 Richesse riche ne makith nought
 Hym that on tresour sette his thought ;
 For richesse stonte in suffisaunce,
 And no thyng in habundaunce ;
 For suffisaunce alle oonly
 Makith men to lyve richely.

‘ For he that hath mycches ⁴ tweyne,

¹ Feigned ² Given. ³ Know. ⁴ Loaves (Fr. *miche*)

Ne value in his demeigne,¹
 Lyveth more at ese, and more is riche, 5590
 Than doth he that is *chiche*,²
 And in his berne hath, soth to seyn,
 An hundred mauis³ of whete greyne,
 Though he be chapman or marchaunte,
 And have of golde many besaunte.
 For in the getyng he hath such woo,
 And in the kepyng drede also,
 And sette evermore his bisynesse
 For to encrese, and not to lesse,
 For to aument⁴ and multiplie. 5600
 And though on hepis that lye hym bye,
 Yit never shal make his richesse,
 Asseth⁵ unto his gredynesse,
 "But the povre that recchith⁶ nought,
 Save of his lyflode,⁷ in his thought,
 Which that he getith with his travaile,
 He dredith nought that it shalle faile,
 Though he have lytel worldis goode,
 Mete and drynke, and esy foode,
 Upon his travel and lyvyng, 5610
 And also suffisaunt clothying.
 Or if in syknesse that he falle,
 And lothe mete and drynke withalle,
 Though he have not his mete to bye,
 He shal bithynke hym hastely,
 To putte hym oute of alle daunger.

¹ Control. ² Stingy. Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 13,524. ³ A
 measure (O Fr. *muís*, equal to about forty bushels). ⁴ Augmen-
⁵ Sufficient. ⁶ Recketh. ⁷ Livelihood.

That he of mete hath no myster ;¹
 Or that he may with lytel eke
 Be founden, while that he is seke ;
 Or that men shulle hym berne ² in haste, 5620
 To lyve, til hys syknesse be paste,
 To somme maysondewe ³ biside ;
 He caste nought what shal hym bitide.
 He thenkith nought that evere he shalle
 Into ony syknesse falie.

" And though it falle, as it may be,
 That alle be-tyme spare shalle he
 As mochel as shal to hym suffice,
 While he is sike in ony wise,
 He doth for that he wole be 5630
 Contente with his poverte
 Withoute nede of ony man.
 So myche in litel have he can,
 He is apaied ⁴ with his fortune ;
 And for he nyl be importune
 Unto no wightte, ne honerous,⁵
 Nor of her goodes coveitous :
 Therfore he spareth, it may wel bene,
 His pore estate for to sustene.

" Or if hym lust not for to spare, 5640
 But suffrith forth, as not ne ware,
 Atte last it hapneth, as it may,
 Right unto his laste day,
 And take the world as it wolde be ;

¹ Need (O. Fr. *mestier*). ² Carry ³ Hospital (Fr. *maison-dieu*)
 Satisfied. ⁵ Onerous.

For evere in herte thenkith he
 The sonner that Deth hym slo,¹
 To paradys the sonner go
 He shal, there for to lyve in blisse,
 Where that he shal noo goode misse.
 Thider he hopith God shal hym sende, 5650
 Aftir his wrecchid lyves ende.

“ Pictigoras² hym-siif rehersedes,
 In a book that the Golden Verses
 Is clepid, for the nobilite
 Of the honourable ditee :
 ‘ Thanne whanne thou goste thy body fro,
 Fre in the eir thou shalt up go,
 And leven al humanite,
 And purely lyve in deite.’
 He is a foole withouten were³ 5660
 That trowith have his countre neere.
 In erthe is not oure countre,
 That may these clerkis seyn and see
 In Boice of Consolacioun,⁴
 Where it is maked mencion
 Of oure countre pleyn at the eye,
 By teching of philosophie,
 Where lewid men myghte lere witte,
 Who-so that wolde translaten it.
 If he be sich that can wel lyve 5670
 Aftir his rente may hym geve,
 And not desireth more to have,
 Than may fro poverté hym save.⁵

¹ Slay. ² Pythagoras. ³ Doubt. ⁴ Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, book iv., met. 1. ⁵ This was also the good doctrine of Mr. Micawber.

"A wise man seide, as we may seen,
Is no man wrecched, but he it wene,
Be he kyng, knyght, or ribaude.
And many a ribaude is mery and baude
That swinkith ¹ and berith, bothe day and
nyght,

Many a burthen of grete myght,
The whiche doth hym lasse offense, 5680
For he suffrith in pacience.

They laugh and daunce, trippe and synge,
And leye not up for her lyvyng,
But in the taverne alle dispendith
The wynnyng that God hem sendith.
Thanne goth he fardeles for to bere,²
With as good chere as he did ere,
To swynke and traveile he not feyntith,
For for to robben he disdeyntith;
But right anoon, aftir his swynke, 5690
He goth to taverne for to drynke.

"Alle these ar riche in abundaunce,
That can thus have suffisaunce
Wel more than can an usurere,
As God wel knowith, withoute were.
For an usurer, so God me se,
Shal nevere for richesse riche be,
But evermore pore and indigent,
Scarce,³ and gredy in his entent.

"For soth it is, whom it displese, 5700
Ther may no marchaunt lyve at ese,

¹ Laboreth ² Cf. *Hamlet*, act iii., sc. 1, l. 76. ³ Pinched.

His herte in sich a were¹ is sett,
 That it brenneth quyke to gete,
 Ne never shal, though he hath geten,
 Though he have gold in gerner geten,
 For to be nedy he dredith sore.
 Wherfore to geten more and more
 He sette his herte and his desire ;
 So hote he brennyth in the fire
 Of coveitise, that makith hym woode 5710
 To purchace² other mennes goode.
 He undirfongith a gret peyne,
 That undirtakith to drynke up Seyne ;³
 For the more he drynkith, ay
 The more he leveth, the soth to say.
 Thus is thirst of fals getyng,
 That laste ever in coveityng,
 And the angwisshe and distresse
 With the fire of gredynesse.
 She fightith with hym ay, and stryveth, 5720
 That his herte a-sondre ryveth ;
 Such gredynesse hym assaylith,
 That whanne he most hath, most he failith.

“ Phiciciens and advocates
 Gone right by the same gates.
 They selle her science for wynnyng,
 And haunte⁴ her crafte for gret getyng.
 Her wynnyng is of such swetnesse.
 That if a man falle in sikenesse,

¹ Confusion. ² Obtain. ³ Cf. the expression “ Drink of Eisel,
Hamlet, act v., sc. 1, l. 299. ⁴ Practice

They are fulle glad, for ther encrese ; 5730
 For by her wille, withoute lees,
 Everiche man shulde be seke,
 And though they die, they sette not a leke.
 After whanne they the gold have take,
 Fulle litel care for hem they make.
 They wolde that fourty were seke atonys,
 Yhe, two hundred, in flesh and bonys,
 And yit two thousand, as I gesse,
 For to encrecen her richesse.
 They wole not worchen in no wise, 5740
 But for lucre and coveitise,
 For fysic gynneth first by ‘fy,’
 The phicicien also sothely ;
 And sithen it goth fro ‘fy’ to ‘sy ;’
 To truste on hem is foly ;
 For they nyl in no maner gre ¹
 Do right nought for charite.

“Eke in the same secte ² ar sette
 Alle tho that prechen for to gete
 Worshipes, honour, and richesse. 5750
 Her hertis arn in grete distresse,
 That folk lyve not holily !
 But aboven alle specialy,
 Sich as prechen veynglorie,
 And toward God have no memorie,
 But forth as ypocrites trace,³
 And to her soules deth purchase,
 And outward shewing holynesse,
 Though they be fulle of cursidnesse.

¹ Favor. ² Division (section). ³ Go (literally, make tracks)

“ Not liche to the apostles twelve, 576a
 They deceyve other and hem-selve ;
 Bigiled is the giler thanne.
 For prechyng of a cursed man,
 Though to other may profite,
 Hymself it availeth not a myte ;
 For ofte goode predicacioun
 Cometh of evel entencioun.¹
 To hym not vaileth² his preching,
 Alle helpe he other with his teching ;
 For where they good ensaumples take, 577a
 There is he with veynglorie shake.

“ But late us leven these prechoures,
 And speke of hem that in her toures
 Hepe up her gold, and faste shette,
 And sore theron her herte sette.
 They neither love God, ne drede ;
 They kepe more than it is nede,
 And in her bagges sore it bynde ;
 Out of the sonne, and of the wynde,
 They putte up more than nede were, 578a
 Whanne they seen pore folke forfare,³
 For hunger die, and for cold quake ;
 God can wel vengeance therof take.

“ Thre grete myscheves hem assailith,
 And thus in gadring ay travaylith ;
 With myche payne they wyne richesse,
 And drede hem holdith in distresse,
 To kepe that they gadre faste ;
 With sorwe they leve it at the laste ;

¹ Cf *Canterbury Tales*, l. 9500. ² Availeth. ³ Fare ill.

With sorwe they bothe dye and lyve, 5790
 That unto richesse her hertis give,
 And in defaute of love it is,
 As it shewith ful wel, iwys ;
 For if this gredy, the sothe to seyn,
 Loveden, and were loved ageyn,
 And goode love regned over-alle,
 Such wikkidnesse ne shulde falle ;
 But he shulde geve that most good hadde
 To hem that weren in nede bistadde,
 And lyve withoute false usure, 5800
 For charite, fulle clene and pure.
 If they hem geve to goodnesse,
 Defendyng hem from ydelnesse,
 In alle this world thanne pore noon
 We shulde fyr.de, I trowe not oon.
 But chaunged is this world unstable,
 For love is over-alle vendable.
 We se that no man loveth nowe
 But for wynnyng and for prowē ;
 And love is thrallled in servage 5810
 Whanne it is sold for avauntage ;
 Yit wommen wole her bodyes selle ;
 Suche soules goth to the devel of helle." 1

Whanne Love hadde told hem his entente, 2

At this point ends the consecutive translation of the French poem. The translator leaves the original at line 5160, and returns to it again at line 10,714, omitting 5545 of the French lines, which are even more episodical than many that are Englisht. 2 Namely, that he had been deserted by his old-time assistants, Ovid, William of Lorris, and others, and needed the aid of new supporters, the persons of the allegory, whom he calls barons.

The baronage to councel wente ;
 In many sentences they fille,
 And dyversely they seide hir tille :¹
 But aftir discorde they accordede,
 And her accord to Love recordede.
 " Sir," seiden they, " we ben atone, 5820
 Bi evene accorde of everichone,
 Outake² Richesse al oonly,
 That sworne hath ful hauteynly,
 That she the castelle³ nyl not assaile,
 Ne smyte a stroke in this bataile,
 With darte ne mace, spere ne knyf,
 For man that spekith or berith the lyf,
 And blameth youre emprise, iwys,
 And from oure hoost departed is, —
 Atte leste wey, as in this plyte,⁴ — 5830
 So hath she this man in dispite ;
 For she seith he ne loved hir never,
 And therfore she wole hate hym evere.
 For he wole gadre no tresoure,
 He hath hir wrath for evermore.
 He agylte⁵ hir never in other caas,
 Lo, heere alle hoolly his trespas !
 " She seith wel, that this other day
 He axide hir leve to gone the way
 That is clepid To-moche-gevyng, 5840
 And spak fulle faire in his praiyng ;
 But whanne he praiede hir, pore was he,

¹ To. ² Except. ³ In which Bialacoil was imprisoned. ⁴ Quarre.
⁵ Offended

Therefore she warned ¹ hym the entre.
 Ne yit is he not thryven so
 That he hath geten a peny or two.
 That quyately is his owne in holde.
 Thus hath Richesse us alle tolde;
 And whanne Richesse us this recorded,
 Withouten hir we ben accorded.

“And we fynde in oure accordaunce, 5850
 That False-semblant and Abstinaunce,
 With alle the folk of her bataille,
 Shulle at the hyndre gate assayle,
 That Wikkid-tunge hath in kepyng,
 With his Normans fulle of janglyng.
 And with hem Curtesie and Largesse,
 That shulle shewe her hardynesse,
 To the olde wyf that kepte so harde
 Fair-welcomyng ² withynne her warde.
 Thanne shal Delite and Wel-heelynge ³ 5860
 Fonde ⁴ Shame adowne to brynge,
 With alle her oost erly and late;
 They shulle assailen that ilke gate.
 Agaynes Drede sha'lle Hardynesse
 Assayle, and also Sikernesse,
 With alle the folk of her ledyng,
 That never wiste what was fleyng.

“Fraunchise shall fight, and eke Pite,
 With Daunger fulle of cruelte.
 Thus is youre hoost ordeyned wele; 5870

¹ Refused ² Bialacoil of the early part of the poem. (*Fr. Bel Accueil*) ³ Well-hiding. ⁴ Try

Doune shalle the castelle every dele,
 If everiche do his entent,
 So that Venus be present,
 Youre modir, fulle of vesselage,¹
 That can ² ynough of such usage ;
 Withouten hir may no wight spede
 This werk, neithir for word ne deede.
 Therfore is good ye for hir sende,
 For thurgh hir may this werk amende."

Amour. "Lordynges, my modir, the god
 desse, 588a

That is my lady, and my maistresse,
 Nis not alle at my willyng,
 Ne doth not alle my desiryng.
 Yit can she some tyme done labour,
 Whanne that hir lust, in my socour,
 As my nede is for to a-cheve,
 But now I thenke hir not to greve.
 My modir is she, and of childehede
 I bothe worshiþe hir, and eke drede ;
 For who that dredith sire ne dame 589a
 Shal it abyē ³ in body or name.
 And, netheles, yit kunne we
 Sende aftir hir, if nede be,
 And were she nygh, she comen wolde,
 I trowe that no thyng myght hir holde.
 "Mi modir is of gret prowesse ;
 She hath tan ⁴ many a fortresse,
 That cost hath many a pounce er this,

¹ Loyal spirit. ² Knows. ³ Suffer for. ⁴ Taken.

There I nas not present, ywis ;
 And yit men seide it was my dede ; 5900
 But I come never in that stede ;¹
 Ne me ne likith, so mote I the,²
 That such toures ben take withoute me.
 For-why me thenkith that in no wise
 It may bene clepid but marchandise.

"Go bye a courser blak or white,
 And pay therfore ; than art thou quyte.
 The marchaunt owith thee right nought,
 Ne thou hym whanne thou it hast bought.
 I wole not sellyng clepe gevyng, 5910
 For sellyng axeth no guerdonyng ;
 Here lith no thank, ne no merite,
 That oon goth from that other al quyte.
 But this sellyng is not semblable ;
 For, whanne his hors is in the stable,
 He may it selle ageyn, *parde*,
 And wynnyn³ on it, suche happe may be ;
 Alle may the man not leese, iwys,
 For at the leest the skynne is his.

"Or ellis, if it so bitide 5920
 That he wole kepe his hors to ride,
 Yit is he lord ay of his horse.
 But thilke chaffare is wel worse,
 There Venus entremetith ought ;⁴
 For who-so such chaffare hath bought,
 He shal not worchen so wisely,
 That he ne shal leese al outerly

¹ Place. * Thrive. ³ Gain. ⁴ Meddleth aught.

Bothe his money and his chaffare ;
 But the seller of the ware
 The prys and profit have shalle. 5930
 Certeyn the bier¹ shal leese alle,
 For he ne can so dere it bye
 To have lordship and fulle maistrie
 Ne have power to make lettyng,
 Neithir for gift ne for prechyng,
 That of his chaffare maugre his,
 Another shal have as moche iwis,
 If he wole geve as myche as he,
 Of what contrey so that he be ;
 Or for right nought, so happe may, 5940
 If he can flater hir to hir pay.²

“ Ben thanne siche marchauntz wise ?

No, but fooles in every wise,
 Whanne they bye sich thyng wilfully,
 There as they leese her good folyly.
 But natheles, this dar I say,
 My modir is not wont to pay,
 For she is neither so fool ne nyce,³
 To entremete hir of sich vice.
 But truste wel, he shal pay alle, 5950
 That repent of his bargeyn shalle,
 Whanne Poverty putte hym in distresse,
 Alle were he scoler to Richesse ;
 That is for me in gret yernyng,
 Whanne she assentith to my willyng.

“ But, by my modir seint Venus,

¹ Buver. ² Satisfaction. ³ Ignorant

And by hir fader Saturnus,
That hir engendride by his lyf,
But not upon his weddid wyf! —
Yit wole I more unto you swere,
To make this thyng the seurere, —
Now by that feith, and that leute ¹
That I owe to alle my britheren fre,
Of which ther nys wight undir heven
That kan her fadris names neven, ²
So dyverse and so many ther be,
That with my modir have be prive!

5960

"Yit wolde I swere, for sikirnesse,
The pole ³ of helle to my witnesse,
Now drynke I not this yeere clarre, ⁴
If that I lye, or forsworne be!

5970

For of the goddes the usage is,
That who-so hym forswereth amys
Shal that yeer drynke no clarre.
Now have I sworne ynough, *pardee*;
If I forswere me, thanne am I lorne,
But I wole never be forsworne;
Syth Richesse hath me failed heere,
She shal abyge ⁵ that trespas dere,
Atte leeste wey, but she hir arme
With swerd, or sparth, or gysarme. ⁶

5980

For certis sith she loveth not me,
Fro thilk tyme that she may se
The castelle and the tour to shake,

¹ Loyalty. ² Name. ³ Pool. ⁴ The French is *piment*. Cf *Cam
terbury Tales*, ll. 1471, 3378. ⁵ Pay for. ⁶ Halberd or axe.

In sory tyme she shal a-wake.
 If I may grepe a riche man
 I shal so pulle¹ hym, if I can,
 That he shal, in a fewe stoundes,²
 Lese alle his markis and his poundis.
 I shal hym make his pens out-slynge, 599¹
 But they in his gerner³ sprynge ;
 Oure maydens shal eke pluk hym so,
 That hym shal neden fetheres mo,
 And make hym selle his londe to spende,
 But he the bet kunne hym defende.

“ Pore men han maad her lord of me ;
 Al-though they not so myghty be,
 That they may fede me in delite,
 I wole not have hem in despite.
 No good man hateth hem, as I gesse, 6000
 For chynche⁴ and feloun is Richesse,
 That so can chase hem and dispise,
 And hem defoule in sondry wise.
 They loven fulle bet, so God me spede,
 Than doth the riche chynchy grede,
 And ben, in good feith, more stable
 And trewer, and more serviabie.
 And therfore it suffisith me
 Her goode herte and her beaute.
 They han on me sette alle her thought 6010
 And therfore I forgete hem nought.
 I wole hem bringe in grete noblesse,

¹ Pluck. Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 652. ² Moments. ³ We shoul
 now say safe, or strong box. ⁴ Niggard.

If that I were god of Richesse,
 As I am god of Love sothely,
 Sich routhe upon her pleynt have I.
 Therfore I must his socour be,
 That peyneth hym to serven me,
 For if he deide for love of this,
 Thanne semeth in me no love ther is."

Les Barons. "Sir," seide they, "soth is every
 deel 602c

That ye reherce, and we wote wel
 Thilk oth to holde is resonable ;
 For it is good and covenable,¹
 That ye on riche men han sworne.
 For, sir, this wote we wel biforne ;
 If riche men done you homage,
 That is as fooles done outrage ;
 But ye shulle not forsworne be,
 Ne lette therfore to drynke clarre,
 Or pyment makid fresh and newe. 6030

"Ladies shulle hem such pepir² brewe,
 If that they falle into her laas,³
 That they for woo mowe seyn 'Allas !'
 Ladyes shullen ever so curteis be,
 That they shal quyte youre oth alle free.
 Ne sekith never othir vicaire,
 For they shal speke with hem so faire
 That ye shal holde you paied fulle wele.
 Though ye you medle⁴ never a dele,

¹ Appropriate. ² Pepper. This spice was of exceeding value in
 the Middle Ages. ³ Snare. ⁴ Interfere.

Late ladies worthe¹ with her thyngis, 6040
 They shal hem telle so fele tidynges,
 And moeve hem eke so many requestis
 Bi flateri, that not honest is,
 And therto geve hem such thankynges,
 What with kysyng and with talkynges,
 That certis, if they trowed be,
 Shal never leve hem londe ne fee
 That it nyl as the moeble fare,²
 Of which they first delyverid are.
 Now may ye telle us alle youre wille, 6050
 And we youre heestes³ shal fulfille.

“But Fals-semblant dar not, for drede
 Of you, sir, medle⁴ hym of this dede,
 For he seith that ye ben his foo ;
 He note if ye wole worche hym woo.
 Wherefore we pray you alle, beau sire,
 That ye forgyve hym now your ire,
 And that he may dwelle, as your man,
 With Abstinence, his dere lemman ;
 This oure accord and oure wille nowe.” 6060

“Parfay,” seide Love, “I graunte it yowe ;
 I wole wel holde hym for my man ;
 Now late hym come :” and he forth ran.
 “Fals-semblant,” quod Love, “in this wise
 I take thee heere to my servise,
 That thou oure freendis helpe alway,
 And hyndreth hem neithir nyght ne day,
 But do thy myght hem to releve,

¹ Be. ² Movables go. ³ Commands. ⁴ Interfere

And eke oure enemyes that thou greve.
 Thyne be this myght, I graunte it thee, 6070
 My kyng of harlotes¹ shalt thou be ;
 We wole that thou have such honour.

“ Certeyne thou art a fals traitour,
 And eke a theef · sith thou were borne,
 A thousand tyme thou art forsworne.
 But, netheles, in oure heryng,
 To putte oure folk out of doutyng,
 I bidde thee teche hem, wostowe howe ?
 Bi somme general signe nowe,
 In what place thou shalt founden be, 6080
 If that men hadde myster² of thee,
 And how men shal thee best espye,
 For thee to knowe is gret maistrie ;
 Telle in what place is thyn hauntyng.”

F. Semb. “ Sir, I have fele dyverse wonyng,³
 That I kepe⁴ not rehersed be,
 So that ye wolde respiten me.
 For if that I telle you the sothe,
 I may have harme and shame bothe.
 If that my felowes wisten it, 6090
 My talis shulden me be quytt ;
 For certeyn they wolde hate me,
 If ever I knewe⁵ her cruelte ;
 For they wolde overalle holde hem stille
 Of trouthe that is ageyne her wille ;
 Suche tales kepen they not here.

¹ That is, provost to restrain and correct the misdoers at the court.
Le Roy des Ribauds was an officer of the French court. ² Need.
 Dwelling. ⁴ Care. ⁵ Exposed.

I myght eftsoone bye it fulle deere,
 If I seide of hem ony thing,
 That ought displesith to her heryng.
 For what word that hem prikke or biteth, 6100
 In that word noon of hem deliteth,
 Al were it gospel the evangile,
 That wolde reprove hem of her gile,
 For they are cruel and hauteyne.

“And this thyng wote I welle certeyne,
 If I speke ought to peire her loos,¹
 Your court shal not so welle be cloos,
 That they ne shalle wite it atte last.
 Of goode men am I nought agast,
 For they wole taken on them no thyng, 6110
 Whanne that they knowe al my menyng;
 But he that wole it on hym take,
 He wole hym-silf suspicious make,
 That he his lyf let² covertly,
 In Gile and in Ipocrisie,
 That me engendred and gaf fostryng.”

“They made a fulle good engendryng!”
 Quod Love, “for who-so sothly telle
 They engendrede the devel of helle.
 But nedely, how-so-ever it be,” 6120
 Quod Love, “I wole and charge thee,
 To telle anoon thy wonyng places,
 Heryng ech wight that in this place is;
 And what lyf that thou lyvest also,
 Hide it no lenger now; wherto?”

¹ Impair their honor. ² Leadeth.

Thou most discovere alle thi wurchyng,
 How thou servest, and of what thyng,
 Though that thou shuldist for thi sothe-sawe ¹
 Ben al to-beten and to-drawe ;
 And yit art thou not wont, *pardee*. 6130
 But natheles, though thou beten be,
 Thou shalt not be the first, that so
 Hath for soth-sawe suffred woo."

F. Semb. "Sir, sith that it may liken you,
 Though that I shulde be slayne right now,
 I shal done youre comaundement,
 For therto have I gret talent."

Withouten wordis mo, right thanne,
 Fals-semblant his sermon biganne,
 And seide hem thus in audience : 6140
 "Barouns, take heede of my sentence !
 That wight that list to have knowing
 Of Fals-semblant fulle of flatering,
 He must in worldly folk hym seke,
 And, certes, in the cloistres eke ;
 I wone no where but in hem twey ;
 But not lyk even, soth to sey ;
 Shortly, I wole herberwe ² me,
 There I hope best to hulstred ³ be ;
 And certeynly, sikerest hidyng 6150
 Is undirnethe humblest clothing.

"Religieuse folk ben fulle covert ;
 Seculer folk ben more appert,⁴
 But natheles, I wole not blame

¹ Truth-saying. ² Iodge. ³ Concealed. ⁴ Open

Religious folk, ne hem diffame,
 In what habit that ever they go :
 Religioun umble, and trewe also,
 Wole I not blame, ne dispise,
 But I nyl love it in no wise.

I mene of fals religious, 616c
 That stoute ben, and malicious ;
 That wolen in an abit goo,
 And setten not her herte therto.

“ Religious folk ben al pitous ;
 Thou shalt not seen oon dispitous.¹
 They loven no pride, ne no strif,
 But humblely they wole lede her lyf,
 With which folk wole I never be.

And if I dwelle, I feyne me
 I may wel in her abit go ; 617o
 But me were lever my nekke a-two,
 Than lette² a purpose that I take,
 What covenant that ever I make.

“ I dwelle with hem that proude be,
 And fulle of wiles and subtilite ;
 That worship of this world coveiten,
 And grete nede kunnen espleiten ;³
 And gone and gadren gret pitauncez,
 And purchace hem the acqueyntauncez
 Of men that myghty lyf may leden ; 618o
 And feyne hem pore, and hem-silf feden
 With gode morcels delicious,
 And drinken goode wyne precious,

¹ Spiteful. ² Relax. ³ Display (Fr. *exploiter*, work).

And preche us povert and distresse ;
 And fisshen hem-silf gret richesse,
 With wily nettis that they caste :
 It wole come foule out at the laste.

“ They ben fro clene riligioun went ;¹
 They make the world an argument,
 That hath a foule conclusioun. 6190
 ‘ I have a robe of religioun,
 Thanne am I alle religious ; ’
 This argument is alle roignous ;²
 It is not worth a croked brere, —
 ‘ Abit ne makith neithir monk ne frere,’
 But clene lyf and devocioun,
 Makith gode men of religioun.

“ Netheles, ther kan noon answee,
 How high that evere his heed he shere
 With rasour whetted never so kene, 6200
 That Gile in braunches kut thrittene,³
 Ther can no wight distincte it so,
 That he dare sey a word therto.

“ But what herberwe that ever I take.
 Or what semblant that evere I make,
 I mene but gile, and folowe that ;
 For right no mo than Gibbe oure cat,
 ‘ That wayteth⁴ mice and rattes to kyllen,
 Ne entende I but to bigilyng.

“ Ne no wight may, by clothing, 6210
 Wite with what folk is my dwellyng,
 Ne by my wordis yit, *parde*,

¹ Turned. ² Shabby. ³ Thirteen friars in a convent. ⁴ Watcheth

So softe and so plesaunt they be.
 Biholde the dedis that I do ;
 But thou be blynde thou oughtest so ;
 For varie her wordis fro her deede,
 They thenke on ¹ gile, withoute dreede,
 What maner clothing that they were,
 Or what estate that evere they bere,
 Lered or lewde, ² lord or lady, 622c
 Knyght, squyer, burgeis, or bayly."

Right thus while Fals-semblant sermoneth,
 Eftsones Love hym aresoneth,
 And brake his tale in his spekyng
 As though he had hym tolde lesyng.
 And seide, "What devel is that I here ?
 What folk hast thou us nempned ³ heere ?
 May men fynde religioun
 In worldly habitacioun ?"

F. Semb. "Yhe, sir ; it folowith not that they
 Shulde lede a wikked lyf, parfey, 623i
 Ne not therfore her soules leese,
 That hem to worldly clothes chese ; ⁴
 For, certis, it were gret pitee.
 Men may in seculer clothes see
 Florishen ⁵ hooly religioun.
 Fulle many a seynt in feeld and toune,
 With many a virgine glorious,
 Devoute, and fulle religious,
 Han deied, that comyn cloth ay beeren, 624c
 Yit seyntes nevere-the-lesse they weren.

¹ Intend. ² Learned or ignorant. ³ Named. ⁴ Choose. ⁵ Adora

" I cowde reken you many a ten ;
 Yhe, wel nygh alle these hooly wymmen,
 That men in chirchis herie¹ and seke,
 Bothe maydens, and these wyves eke,
 That baren fulle many a faire child heere,
 Wered alwey clothis seculere,
 And in the same dieden they
 That seyntes weren, and ben alwey.
 The elevene thousand maydens² deere, 6250
 That beren in heven her ciergis³ clere,
 Of whiche men rede in chirche, and syng,
 Were take in seculer clothing,
 Whanne they resseyved martirdome
 And wonnen hevene unto her home.
 ' Good herte makith the goode thought ; '
 The clothing geveth ne reveth nought.
 The goode thought and the worching,
 That makith the religioun flowryng ;
 Ther lyth the goode religioun, 6260
 Aftir the right entencioun.

" Who-so took a wethers skynne,
 And wrapped a gredy wolf therynne,
 For he shulde go with lambis whyte,
 Wenest thou not he wolde hem bite ?
 Yhis ! neverthelasse, as he were woode,
 He wolde hem wery,⁴ and drinke the bloode ;
 And wel the rather hem disceyve,
 For sith they cowde not perceyve

¹ Praise. ² Those said to have been martyred by the Huns at Cologne. The story is in the *Legenda Aurea*. ³ Candles. ⁴ Fight.

His treget¹ and his cruelte, 6270
They wolde hym folowe, al wolde he fle.

“ If ther be wolves of siche hewe,
Amonges these apostlis newe,²
Thou, hooly chirche, thou maist be wailed !
Sith that thy citee is assayled
Thourgh knyghtis of thyn owne table,
God wote thi lordship is doutable !
If thei enforcen it to wynne,
That shulde defende it fro withynne,
Who myghte defense agens hem make ? 6280
Withoute stroke it mote be take,
Of trepeget³ or mangonel ;³
Withoute displaiyng of pensel.⁴

“ And if God nyl done it socour,
But lat renne in this colour,
Thou most thyn heestis laten be.
Thanne is ther nought, but yelde thee,
Or geve hem tribute, doutlees,
And holde it of hem to have pees :
But gretter harme bitide thee, 6290
That they al maister of it be.
Wel konne they scorne thee withal ;
By day stuffen⁵ they the walle,
And al the nyght they mynen there.
Nay, thou planten most elles where
Thyn ympes,⁶ if thou wolt fruyt have.
Abide not there thi-silf to save.

¹ Deceit. ² Orders of friars that had originated in the thirteenth century. ³ Military engines. ⁴ Banner. ⁵ Crowd. ⁶ Grafts.

" But now pees ! heere I turne ageyne ;
 I wole nomore of this thing seyne,
 If I may passen me herby, 6300
 For I myghte maken you wery.
 But I wole heten you al-way,
 To helpe youre freendis what I may,
 So they wollen my company ;
 For they be shent ¹ al outerly,
 But if so falle that I be
 Ofte with hem, and they with me.
 And eke my lemman ² mote they serve,
 Or they shulle not my love deserve.
 Forsothe I am a fals traitour ; 6310
 God juggede me for a thief trichour ; ⁸
 Forsworne I am, but wel nygh none
 Wote of my gile, til it be done.

" Thurgh me hath many oon deth resseyved,
 That my treget ⁴ nevere aperceyved ;
 And yit reseyveth, and shal resseyve,
 That my falsnesse shal nevere a-perceyve :
 But who-so doth, if he wise be,
 Hym is right good be warre of me.
 But so sligh is the a-perceyvynge 6320
 That al to late cometh knowyng.
 For Protheus, ⁵ that cowde hym chaunge
 In every shape homely and straunge,
 Cowde nevere sich gile ne tresoune
 As I ; for I come never in toune

¹ Discomfited. ² Sweetheart (*i. e.*, Constrained-Abstinence)
 Cunning ⁴ Deceit. ⁵ Proteus.

There as I myghte knowen be,
 Though men me bothe myght here and see.
 Fulle wel I can my clothis chaunge,
 Take oon, and make another straunge.

“Now am I knyght, now chasteleyne ; 633c
 Now prelat, and now chapeleyne ;
 Now prest, now clerk, and now forstere ;
 Now am I maister, now scolere ;
 Now monke, now chanoun, now baily ;
 What ever myster ¹ man am I.
 Now am I prince, now am I page,
 And kan ² by herte every langage.
 Somme tyme am I hore and olde ;
 Now am I yonge, stoute, and bolde ;
 Now am I Robert, now Robyn ; ³ 634c
 Now frere menour, ⁴ now jacobyn ; ⁵
 And with me folwith my loteby, ⁶
 To done me solas and company,
 That hight dame Abstinence, and reyned ⁷.
 In many a queynte array feyned.
 Ryght as it cometh to hir iykyng,
 I fulfille al hir desiryng.

“Somtyme a wommans cloth take I ;
 Now am I a mayde, now lady.
 Somtyme I am religious ; 635c
 Now lyk an anker ⁸ in an hous.
 Somtyme am I a prioresse,
 And now a nonne, and now abbesse ;

¹ Kind. ² Know. ³ That is, now high, now low. ⁴ Minorite
 (i. e., Franciscan). ⁵ Dominican. ⁶ Lemman. Cf. l. 6308. ⁷ As
 ayed. ⁸ Anchorite.

And go thurgh alle regiouns,
 Sekyng alle religiouns.
 But to what ordre that I am sworne,
 I take the strawe and lete the corne ;
 To foly¹ folk I enhabite,
 I axe nomore but her abite.

"What wole ye more? in every wise 6360
 Right as me lyst I me disgise.
 Wel can I were² me undir wede ;
 Unlyk is my word to my dede.
 Thus make I into my trappis falle,
 Thurgh my pryveleges, alle
 That ben in Cristendome alyve.
 I may assoile, and I may shryve,
 That no prelat may lette me,
 Alle folk, where evere thei founde be :
 I note no prelate may done so, 6370
 But it the pope be, and no mo,
 That made thilk establisshing.

"Now is not this a propre thing?
 But were my sleightis a-perceyved
 [Ne shulde I more ben receyved]
 As I was wont ; and wostow whye ?
 For I dide hem a tregetrie ;³
 But therof geve I a lytel tale,
 I have the silver and the male,⁴
 So have I prechid and eke shreven,
 So have I take, so have I geven, 6380
 Thurgh her foly, husbonde and wyf,

¹ Befool. ² Defend. ³ Trick. ⁴ Budget (Fr. *malle*).

That I lede right a joly lyf,
 Thurgh symplesse of the prelacye ;
 They knowe not al my tregettrie.

“ But for asmoche as man and wyf
 Shulde shewe her parоче prest her lyf
 Onys a yeer, as seith the book,¹
 Er ony wight his housel ² took,
 Thanne have I pryvylegis large,
 That may of myche thing discharge, 6390
 For he may seie right thus, *parde* :
 ‘ Sir Preest, in shrift I telle it thee,
 That he to whom that I am shryven
 Hath me assoiled, and me geven
 For penaunce sothly for my synne,
 Which that I fonde me gilty ynne ;
 Ne I ne have nevere entencioun
 To make double confessioun,
 Ne reherce efte ³ my shrift to thee ;
 O shrift is right ynough to me. 6400
 This oughte thee suffice wele,
 Ne be not rebel never a dele ;
 For certis, though thou haddist it sworne,
 I wote no prest ne prelat borne
 That may to shrift efte me constreyne.
 And if they done I wole me pleyne ;
 For I wote where to pleyne wele.
 Thou shalt not streyne ⁴ me a dele,
 Ne enforce me, ne not me trouble,
 To make my confessioun double. 6410

¹ That is, the Bible. ² Eucharist. ³ Again. ⁴ Constrain.

Ne I have none affeccioun
 To have double absolucioun.
 The firste is right ynough to me ;
 This latter assoilyng quyte I thee.
 I am unbounde ; what maist thou fynde
 More of my synnes me to unbynde ?
 For he that myght hath in his honde
 Of alle my synnes me unbonde.
 And if thou wolt me thus constreyne,
 That me mote nedis on thee pleyne, 6420
 There shalle no jugge imperial,
 Ne bisshop, ne official,
 Done jugement on me ; for I
 Shal gone and pleyne me openly
 Unto my shriftefadir newe,
 That highte Frere Wolf¹ untrewē,
 And he shal cheveys hym² for me,
 For I trowe he can hampre thee.

“ But, lord ! he wolde be wrooth withalle,
 If men hym wolde Frere Wolf calle ! 6430
 For he wolde have no pacience,
 But done al cruel vengeaunce !
 He wolde his myght done at the leeste,
 No thing spare for Goddis heeste.³
 And, God so wys be my socour,
 But thou geve me my Savyour⁴
 At Ester, whanne it likith me,
 Withoute presyng⁵ more on thee,

¹ That is, a false friar. ² Labor. ³ Command. ⁴ That is, the
 transubstantiated bread. ⁵ Setting value.

I wole forth, and to hym gone,
 And he shal housele me anoon, 6440
 For I am out of thi grucching;
 I kepe not dele with thee no thing.'

"Thus may he shryve hym, that forsaketh
 His parochē prest, and to me takith.
 And if the prest wole hym refuse,
 I am fulle redy hym to accuse,
 And hym punysshē and hampre so,
 That he his chirche shal forgo.

"But who-so hath in his felyng
 The consequence of such shryvyng 6450
 Shal sene that prest may never have myght
 To knowe the conscience a-right
 Of hym that is undir his cure.
 And this ageyns holy scripture,
 That biddith every heerde¹ honeste
 Have verry knowing of his beeste.
 But pore folk that gone by strete,
 That have no gold, ne sommes grete,
 Hem wolde I lete to her prelates,
 Or lete her prestis knowe her states, 6460
 For to me right nought geve they."

Amour. "And why is it?"

F. Semb. "For they ne may
 They ben so bare, I take no kepe;
 But I wole have the fatte sheepe;
 Lat parish prestis have the lene,
 I geve not of her harme a bene!

¹ Shepherd, pastor.

"And if that prelates grucche it,
That oughten wroth be in her witt,
To leese her fatte beestes so,
I shal geve hem a stroke or two, 6470
That they shal leesen with the force,
Yhe, bothe her mytre and her croce.
Thus jape I hem, and have do longe,
My pryveleges ben so stronge."

Fals-semblant wolde have stynted heere,
But Love ne made hym no such cheere,
That he was wery of his sawe ;
But for to make hym glad and fawe,¹
He seide, "Telle on more specialy,
Hou that thou servest untrewely. 6480
Telle forth, and shame thee never a dele,
For, as thyn abit² shewith wele,
Thou servest an hooly heremyte."

F. Semb. "Sothe is; but I am but an ypo-
cite."

Amour. "Thou goste and prechest poverté?"

F. Semb. "Yhe, sir; but Richesse hath
pouste."³

Amour. "Thou prechest abstinence also?"

F. Semb. "Sir, I wole fillen, so mote I go,
My paunche of goode mete and wyne,
As shulde a maister of dyvyne; 6490
For how that I me pover feyne,
Yit alle pore folk I disdeyne.⁴
I love bettir that queyntaunce,

¹ Fain. ² Habit. ³ Power ⁴ Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 247.
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Ten tyme, of the kyng of Fraunce,
 Than of a pore man of mylde mode,
 Though that his soule be al-so gode.
 For whanne I see beggers quakyng,
 Naked on myxnes ¹ al stynkyng,
 For hungre crie, and eke for care,
 I entremete ² not of her fare. 6500

They ben so pore, and ful of pyne,
 They myght not oonys geve me a dyne,
 For they have no thing but her lyf ;
 What shulde he geve that likketh his knyf ?

“It is but foly to entremete,
 To seke in houndes nest fat mete.
 Lete bere hem to the spitel ³ anoon,
 But, for me, comfort gete they noon.
 But a riche sike usurere

Wolde I visite and drawe nere. 6510
 Hym wole I comforte and rehete,⁴
 For I hope of his gold to gete.
 And if that wikkid Deth hym have,
 I wole go with hym to his grave.

“And if ther ony reprove me,
 Why that I lete the pore be,
 Wostow how I not a-scape ?
 I sey and swere hym ful rape,⁵
 That riche men han more tecches
 Of synne than han pore wrecches, 6520
 And han of counsel more mister ;
 And therefore I wole drawe hem ner.

¹ Dunghills. ² Meddle. ³ Hospital. ⁴ Cheer. ⁵ Quickly

“But as grete hurt, it may so be,
 Hath a soule in right grete poverte,
 As soule is grete richesse, forsothe,
 Al be it that they hurten bothe.
 For richesse and mendicitees
 Ben clepid two extremytees ;
 The mene is cleped suffisaunce,
 Ther lyth of vertu the aboundaunce.

653^a

“For Salamon, fulle wel I wote,
 In his parablis us wrote,
 As it is knowe to many a wight,
 In his thrittethe chapitre right,
 ‘God, thou me kepe, for thi pouste,¹
 Fro richesse and mendicite ;
 For if a riche man hym dresse
 To thenke to myche on richesse,
 His herte on that so fer is sett
 That he his Creatour forgett ;
 And hym that beggith wole ay greve,
 How shulde I bi his word hym leve ?²
 Unnethe that he nys a mycher,³
 Forsworne, or ellis Goddis lyer.’
 Thus seith Salamones sawes.

654^a

“Ne we fynde writen in no lawis,
 And namely in oure Cristen lay,⁴ —
 Whoso seith ‘yhe,’ I dar sey ‘nay,’ —
 That Crist, ne his apostlis dere,
 While that they walkide in erthe heere,
 Were never seen her bred beggyng,

655^a

¹ Power. ² Believe. ³ Thief. ⁴ Law.

For they nolden beggen for no thing.
 And right thus was men wont to teche ;
 And in this wise wolde it preche,
 The maistres of divinite
 Somtyme in Parys the citee.

“ And if men wolde ther geyn appose ¹
 The nakid text, and lete the glose,
 It myghte soone assoiled be ;
 For men may wel the sothe see, 656a
 That, *parde*, they myght aske a thing
 Pleyonly forth withoute begging.
 For they weren Goddis herdis ² deere,
 And cure of soules hadden heere,
 They nolde no thing begge her fode ;
 For aftir Crist was done on rode,
 With her propre ³ handis they wroughte,
 And with travel, and ellis nought,
 They wonnen alle her sustenaunce,
 And lyveden forth in her penaunce, 657a
 And the remenaunt gaf away
 To other poore folkis alwey.

“ They neither bidden tour ne halle,
 But they in houses smale with alle.
 A myghty man, that can and may,
 Shulde with his honde and body alway
 Wýnne hym his fode in laboring,
 If he ne have rent or sich a thing,
 Al-though he be religious,
 And God to serven curious. 658a

¹ Oppose against. ² Pastors. ³ Own.

Thus mote he done, or do trespas,
 But if it be in certeyn cas,
 That I can reherce, if myster ¹ be,
 Right wel, whanne I the tyme se.

“Seke the book of Seynt Austyne,²
 Be it in papir or perchemyne,
 There as he writ of these worchynges,
 Thou shalt seen that noon excusynges
 A parfit man ne shulde seke
 Bi wordis, ne bi dedis eke,
 Al-though he be religious,
 And God to serven curious,
 That he ne shal, so mote I go,
 With propre hondis and body also,
 Gete his fode in laboryng,
 If he ne have proprete of thing.
 Yit shulde he selle alle his substaunce,
 And with his swynk ³ have sustenaunce,
 If he be parfit in bounte.⁴

6590

“Thus han tho bookes tolde me :
 For he that wole gone ydilly,
 And usith it ay besily
 Go haunten other mennes table,
 He is a trechour ful of fable,
 Ne he ne may, by gode resoun,
 Excuse hym by his orisoun.
 For men bihoveth, in somme gise,
 Ben somtyme in Goddis servise,
 To gone and purchasen her nede.

6600

¹ Need. ² Augustyne. ³ Labor. ⁴ Goodnesa.

“ Men mote eten, that is no drede, 6610
 And slepe, and ek do other thing,
 So longe may they leve praiyng.
 So may they eke her praier blynne,¹
 While that they werke her mete to wynne !
 Seynt Austyn wole therto accorde,
 In thilke book that I recorde. •

“ Justinian ² eke, that made lawes,
 Hath thus forboden by olde dawes :³
 ‘ No man, up peyne to be dede,
 Mighty of body, to begge his brede, 6620
 If he may swynke it for to gete ;
 Men shulde hym rather mayme or bete,
 Or done of hym aperte ⁴ justice,
 Than suffren hym in such malice.’

“ They done not wel, so mote I go,
 That taken such almesse so,
 But if they have somme pryvelege,
 That of the peyne hem wole allege.⁵
 But how that is can I not see,
 But if the prince disseyved be ; 6630
 Ne I ne wene not sikerly,
 That they may have it rightfully.
 But I wole not determine
 Of prynces power, ne defyne,
 Ne by my word comprende, iwys,
 If it so ferre may strecche in this.

“ I wole not entremete ⁶ a dele ;

¹ Cease. ² The Pandects of this celebrated emperor of the East
 ern Empire are referred to. ³ Old days (*i. e.*, the sixth century
 Open. ⁵ Alleviate. ⁶ Meddle.

But I trowe that the book seith wele,
 ‘Who that takith almessis, that be
 Dewe to folk that men may se 6640
 Lame, feble, wery, and bare,
 Pore, or in such maner care,
 That konne wynne hem never mo,
 For they have no power therto,
 He etith his owne dampnyng,’
 But if He lye that made al thing.
 And if ye such a truaunt fynde,
 Chastise hym wel, if ye be kynde.
 But they wolde hate you, per cas,¹
 And if ye fillen in her laas.² 6650
 They wolde eftsoonys do you scathe,
 If that they myghte, late or rathe ;³
 For they be not fulle pacient,
 That han the world thus foule blent.⁴
 And witeth wel, that as God bad
 The good-man selle al that he hadde,
 And folowe hym, and to pore it geve,
 He wolde not therfore that he lyve,
 To serven hym in mendience,⁵
 For it was nevere his sentence ; 6660
 But he bad wirken whanne that neede is,
 And folwe hym in goode dedis.

“Seynt Poule that loved al hooly chirche,
 He bade thappostles for to wirche,
 And wynnen her lyfode in that wise,
 And hem defendede truaundise,⁵

¹ Perchance. ² Snare. ³ Early. ⁴ Deluded. ⁵ Begging

And seide, 'Wirketh with youre honden ;'
 Thus shulde the thing be undirstonden.
 He nolde, iwys, have bidde hem begging,
 Ne sellen gospel, ne prechyng, 667c
 Lest they berafte, with her askyng,
 Folk of her catel¹ or of her thing.

"For in this world is many a man
 That geveth his good, for he ne can
 Werne² it for shame, or ellis he
 Wolde of the asker delyvered be ;
 And for he hym encombrith so,
 He geveth hym good to late hym go :
 But it can hym no thyng profite,
 They lese the gift and the meryte. 668a
 The goode folk that Poule to prechede,
 Profred hym ofte, whan he hem techede,
 Somme of her good in charite ;
 But therfore right no thing toke he ;
 But of his hondwerk wolde he gete
 Clothes to wryne³ hym, and his mete."

Amour. "Telle me thanne how a man may
 lyven,
 That al his good to pore hath given,
 And wole but oonly bidde his bedis,⁴
 And never with hondes laboure his nedis. 669c
 May he do so ?"

F. Semb. "Yhe, sir."

Amour. "And how ?"

F. Semb. "Sir, I wole gladly telle yow ;

¹ Chattels. ² Refuse. ³ Cover. ⁴ Say his prayers.

Seynt Austyn¹ seith, a man may be
 In houses that han proprete,
 As templers and hospitelers,²
 And as these chanouns regulers,
 Or white monkes, or these blake, —
 I wole no mo ensamplis make, —
 And take therof his sustenyng,
 For therynne lyth no begging,
 But other weyes not, ywys ;
 Yit Austyn gabbith not of this.
 And yit fulle many a monke laboreth,
 That God in hooly chirche honoureth ;
 For whanne her swynkyng is agone,
 They rede and synge in chirche anone.

6700

"And for ther hath ben gret discorde,
 As many a wight may bere recorde,
 Upon the estate of mendiciens,³
 I wole shortly, in youre presence,
 Telle how a man may begge at nede,
 That hath not wherwith hym to fede,
 Maugre his felones⁴ jangelyngis ;
 For sothfastnesse wole none hidyngis ;
 And yit percas I may abeye,
 That I to yow sothly thus seye.

6710

"Lo, heere the caas especial :
 If a man be so bestial,
 That he of no craft hath science,⁵

¹ M. Lantin de Damerey says that all of the arguments of False Semblant against manual labor are drawn from a treatise by St. Augustine, *De Opere Monachorum*, addressed to Aurelius, bishop of Carthage. ² These orders did not arise until long after St. Augustine's day. ³ Mendicants. ⁴ Cruel. ⁵ Knowledge.

And nought desireth ignorence, 6720
 Thanne may he go a begging yerne,¹
 Til he somme maner crafte kan lerne,
 Thurgh which, withoute truaundyng,²
 He may in trouthe have his lyvyng.

“Or if he may done no labour,
 For elde, or sykenesse, or langour,
 Or for his tendre age also,
 Thanne may he yit a begging go.

“Or if he have, peraventure, 6730
 Thurgh usage of his norture,
 Lyved over deliciously,
 Thanne oughten good folk comunly
 Han of his myscheef³ somme pitee,
 And suffren hym also, that he
 May gone aboute and begge his breed,
 That he be not for hungur deed.

“Or if he have of craft kunnyng,
 And strengthe also, and desiryng
 To wirken, as he hadde what,
 But he fynde neithir this ne that, 6740
 Thanne may he begge til that he
 Have gotten his necessite.

“Or if his wynnyng be so lite,
 That his labour wole not acqynte
 Sufficiantly al his lyvyng,
 Yit may he go his breed begging;
 Fro dore to dore, he may go trace,⁴
 Til he the remenaunt may purchace.

¹ Quickly. ² Begging. ³ Misfortune. ⁴ Walk.

"Or if a man wolde undirtake
 Ony emprise for to make, 6750
 In the rescous of oure lay,¹
 And it defenden as he may,
 Be it with armes or lettrure,²
 Or other covenable cure,³
 If it be so he pore be,
 Thanne may he begge, til that he
 May fynde in trouthe for to swynke
 And gete hym clothe, mete, and drynke.
 Swynke he with his hondis corporelle,
 And not with hondis espirituelle. 6760

"In all this caas, and in semblables,
 If that ther ben mo resonables,
 He may begge, as I telle you heere,
 And ellis nought in no manere,
 As William Seynt Amour⁴ wolde preche,
 And ofte wolde dispute and teche
 Of this mater alle openly
 At Parys fulle solempnely.
 And also God my soule blesse
 As he had in this stedfastnesse 6770
 The accorde of the Universite,
 And of the puple, as semeth me.

"No good man oughte it to refuse,
 Ne ought hym therof to excuse,
 Be wrothe or blithe, who-so be ;
 For I wole spek, and telle it thee,

¹ Preservation of our faith (lay, law) ² Letters. ³ Appropriate
 care. ⁴ Canon of Beauvais, *circ.* 1240, wrote, against the Mendicants,
De Periculis Novissimorum Temporum (Of the Perils of Modern
 Times).

Al shulde I dye, and be putt doun,
 As was Seynt Poule, in derke prisoun ;
 Or be exiled in this caas
 With wrong, as maister William was, 678a
 That my moder Ypocrysie
 Banysshed for hir gret envye.

“ Mi modir flemed ¹ hym, Seynt Amour,
 The noble dide such labour
 To susteyne evere the loyalte,
 That he to moche agilte ² me.
 He made a book, and lete it write,
 Wherein his lif he did al write,
 And wolde Ich reneyede ³ begging,
 And lyvede by my traveylyng, ⁴ 679a
 If I ne hadde rent ne other goode.

“ What ? wened he that I were woode ?
 For labour myghte me never plese,
 I have more wille to bene at ese ;
 And have wel lever, soth to seye,
 Bifore the puple patre ⁵ and preye,
 And wrie ⁶ me in my foxerie
 Under a cope of papelardie.” ⁷

Quod Love, “ What devel is this that I heere ?
 What wordis tellest thou me heere ? ” 680a

F. Semb. “ What, sir ? Falsnesse, that apert is.”

Amour. “ Thanne dredist thou not Gôd ? ”

F. Semb. “ No, certis :
 For selde in grete thing shal he spede

¹ Banished. ² Offended. ³ Renounced. ⁴ Laboring. ⁵ Repea-
 ter Nosters. ⁶ Cover ⁷ Hypocrisy (literally, pope-ishness).

In this worlde, that God wole drede ;
 For folk that hem to vertu geven,
 And truely on her owne lyven,
 And hem in goodnesse ay contene,
 On hem is lytel thrift i-sene ;
 Suche folk drinken gret mysese ;
 That lyf ne may me never plese. 6810

But se what gold han usurers,
 And silver eke in her garners,
 Taylagiers,¹ and these monyours,²
 Bailifs, bedels, provost, countours ;
 These lyven wel nygh by ravyne,
 The smale puple hem mote enclyne,
 And they as wolves wole hem eten.
 Upon the pore folk they geten
 Fulle moche of that they spende or kepe ;
 Nis none of hem that he nyl strepe 6820
 And wrine³ hem-silfe wel at fulle ;
 Withoute scaldyng they hem pulle.

"The stronge the feble overgoth ;
 But I, that were my symple cloth,
 Robbe bothe robbyng and robbours,
 And gile giling, and gilours.
 By my treget⁴ I gadre and threste
 The grete tresour into my cheste,
 That lyth with me so faste bounde.
 Myn highe paleys do I founde, 6830
 And my delites I fulfille,
 With wyne at fetestes at my wille,

¹ Tax-gatherers. ² Coiners. ³ Cover ⁴ Tricks.

And tables fulle of entremees ;¹
 I wole no lyf, but ese and pees,
 And wyne gold to spende also.
 For whanne the grete bagge is go,
 it cometh right with my japes.

“ Make I not wel tumble myn apes ?
 To wynnen is alwey myn entente ;
 My purchace is bettir than my rente ;² 6840
 For though I shulde beten be,
 Over al I entremete³ me ;
 Withoute me may no wight dure.
 I walke soules for to cure ;
 Of al the world cure have I
 In brede and lengthe ; boldly
 I wole bothe preche and eke counceilen ;
 With hondis wille I not traveilen,
 For of the pope I have the bulle.

“ I ne holde not my wittes dulle ; 6850
 I wole not stynten, in my lyve,
 These emperoures for to shryve,
 Or kyngis, dukis, or lordis grete ;
 But pore folk al quyte I lete.
 I love no such shryvyng, *parde*,
 But it for other cause be.
 I rekke not of pore men,
 Her astate is not worth an hen.
 Where fyndest thou a swynker of labour
 Have me unto his confessour ? 6860

¹ *Entremets*, side dishes. ² Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 256. ³ In
 erpose.

But emperesses, and duchesses,
 Thise queenes, and eke countesses,
 Thise abbessis, and eke bygyns,¹
 These grete ladyes palasyns,
 'These joly knyghtis, and baillyves,
 Thise nonnes, and thise burgeis wyves,
 That riche ben, and eke plesyng,
 And thise maidens welfaryng,
 Wher-so they clad or naked be,
 Uncounceiled goth ther noon fro me. 687c

“ And, for her soules savete,
 At lord and lady, and her meyne,²
 I axe, whanne thei hem to me shryve,
 The proprete of al her lyve,
 And make hem trowe, bothe meest and leest,
 Hir paroche prest nys but a beest
 Agens me and my companye,
 That shrewis ben as gret as I ;
 For whiche I wole not hide in holde
 No pryvete that me is tolde, 688c
 That I by word or signe, y-wis,
 Wole make hem knowe what it is,
 And they wolen also tellen me ;
 They hele³ fro me no pryvyte.
 And for to make yow hem perceyven,
 That usen folk thus to disceyven,
 I wole you seyn, withouten drede.
 What men may in the Gospel rede
 Of Seynt Mathew, the gospelere,
 That seith as I shal you sey heere. 689c

¹ A secular order of women (Fr. *béguines*). ² Retinue. ³ Hides.

“ ‘ Uppon the chaire of Moyses ’ —
 Thus is it glosed douteles,
 That is the olde testament,
 For ther by is the chaire ment —
 ‘ Sitte scribes and pharisen ; ’
 That is to seyn, the cursid men,
 Whiche that we ypocritis calle ;
 ‘ Doth that they preche, I rede ¹ you alle,
 But doth not as they don a dele,
 That ben not wery to seye wele, 6900
 But to do wel no wille have they ;
 And they wolde bynde on folk al-wey,
 That ben to be giled able,
 Burdons that ben importable ; ²
 On folkes shuldris thinges they couchen, ³
 That they nyl with her fyngris touchen.’ ”

Amour. “ And why wole they not touche it ? ”

F. Semb.

“ Why ? ”

For hem ne lyst not, sikirly ;
 For sadde ⁴ burdons that men taken
 Make folkes shuldris aken. 6910
 And if they do ought that good be,
 That is for folk it shulde se :
 Her burdons larger maken they,
 And make her hemmes wide alwey,
 And loven setes at the table
 The firste and most honourable ;
 And for to han the firste chaieris
 In synagogis to hem fulle deere is ;

¹ Advise. ² Unbearable. ³ Lay. ⁴ Heavy.

And willen that folk hem loute ¹ and grete,
 Whanne that they passen thurgh the strete,
 And wolen be cleped Maister also.' 6921

But they ne shulde not willen so ;
 The gospel is ther ageyns, I gesse :
 That shewith wel her wikkidnesse.

“ Another custome use we
 Of hem that wole agens us be,
 We hate hym deedly everichone,
 And we wole werrey ² hym, as oon.
 Hym that oon hatith, hate we alle,
 And congecte ³ hou to done hym falle. 6930
 And if we seen hym wyne honour,
 Richesse or preis, thurgh his valour,
 Provende, rent, or dignyte,
 Fulle fast, iwys, compassen we
 Bi what ladder he is clomben so ;
 And for to maken hym down to go,
 With traisoun we wole hym defame,
 And done hym leese his goode name.
 Thus from his ladder we hym take,
 And thus his freendis foes we make ; 6940
 But word ne wite shal he noon,
 Tille alle hise freendis ben his foon.
 For if we dide it openly,
 We myght have blame redily ;
 For hadde he wist of oure malice,
 He hadde hym kept, but he were nyce.⁴

“ Another is this, that if so falle,

¹ Bow. ² War. ³ Contrive. ⁴ Foolish

That ther be oon amonge us alle
 That doth a good turne, out of drede,
 We seyn it is oure alder deede.¹ 6950
 Yhe, sikerly, though he it feynede,
 Or that hym list, or that hym deyne
 A man thurgh hym avaunced be,
 Therof alle parseners² be we,
 And tellen folk where-so we go,
 That man thurgh us is sprongen so.
 And for to have of men preysyng,
 We purchace, thurgh oure flateryng,
 Of riche men of gret pouste,
 Lettres, to witnesse oure bounte, 6960
 So that man weneth, that may us see,
 That alle vertu in us be.

“ And al-vey pore we us feyne ;
 But how-so that we begge or pleyne,
 We ben the folk, withoute lesyng,
 That alle thing have without havyng ;
 Thus be we dred of the puple, iwis.
 And gladly my purpos is this :
 I dele with no wight, but he
 Have gold and tresour gret plente ; 6970
 Her acqueyntaunce wel love I ;
 This is moche my desire shortly.

“ I entremete me of brokages,³
 I make pees and mariages,
 I am gladly executour,
 And many tymes a procuratour ;

¹ The act of all of us. ² Co-parceners. ³ Agencies.

I am somtyme messenger,
 That fallith not to my myster.¹
 And many tymes I make enquestes ;
 For me that office not honest is ;
 To dele with other mennes thing,
 That is to me a gret lykyng.
 And if that ye have ought to do
 In place that I repeire to,
 I shal it speden thurgh my witt,
 As soone as ye have told me it.

6980

“ So that ye serve me to pay,
 My servyse shal be youre alway.
 But who-so wole chastise me,
 Anoon my love lost hath he ;
 For I love no man in no gise,
 That wole me repreve or chastise ,
 But I wolde al folk undirtake,
 And of no wight no teching take ;
 For I, that othir folk chastie,
 Wole not be taught² fro my folie.

6990

“ I love noon hermitage more ;
 Alle desertes and holtes hore
 And grete wodes everichon,
 I lete hem to the Baptist John.
 I quethe hym quyte, and hym relese
 Of Egipt alle the wildirnesse ·
 To ferre were alle my mansiouns
 Fro citees and goode tounes.
 My paleis and myn hous make I

7000

¹ Trade. ² Chastised. Cf. Judges viii. 10.

There men may renne ynne openly,
 And sey that I the world forsake.
 But al amydde I bilde and make
 My hous, and swimme and pley therynne
 Bet than a fish doth with his fynne. 7010

Of Antecristes men am I,
 Of whiche that Crist seith openly,
 They have abit¹ of hoolynesse,
 And lyven in such wikkednesse.
 Outward lambren² semen we,
 Fulle of goodnesse and of pitee,
 And inward we, withouten fable,
 Ben gredy wolves ravysable.³
 We enviroune bothe londe and se ;
 With alle the world werrien we ; 7020
 We wole ordeyne of al thing :
 Of folkis good, and her lyvyng.

“ If ther be castel or citee
 Wherynne that ony begger be,
 Although that they of Milayne were,
 For therof ben they blamed there ;
 Or if a wight out of mesure
 Wolde lene his gold, and take usure,
 For that he is so coveitous ;
 Or if he be to leccherous, 7030
 Or these that haunte symonye ;
 Or provost fulle of trecherie,
 Or prelat lyvyng jolily,
 Or prest that halt his quene⁴ hym by,

¹ Habit ² Lambs. ³ Ravening. ⁴ Mistress.

Or olde horis hostilers,¹
 Or other bawdes or bordillers,
 Or elles blamed of ony vice,
 Of whiche men shulden done justice :
 Bi alle the seyntes that me pray,
 But they defende hem with lamprey, 7040
 With luce, with elys, with samons,
 With tendre gees, and with capons,
 With tartes, or with chesis fatte,
 With deynte flawnes,² brode and flatte,
 With caleweis,³ or with pullaylle,⁴
 With conynges,⁵ or with fine vitaille,
 That we undir our clothes wide
 Maken thurgh oure golet glide ;
 Or but he wole do come in haste
 Roo⁶ venysoun i-bake in paste, 7050
 Whether so that he loure or groyne,⁷
 He shal have of a corde a loigne,⁸
 With whiche men shal hym bynde and lede,
 To lrenne hym for his synful deede,
 That men shulle here hym crie and rore
 A myle wey aboute and more.

“ Or ellis he shal in prisoun dye,
 But if he wole oure frendship bye,
 Or smerten that that he hath do,
 More than his gilt amounteth to. 7060
 But and he couthe thurgh his sleght
 Do maken up a tour of hight,

¹ Bawds' innkeepers. ² Pannakes. ³ Pears. ⁴ Poultry. ⁵ Conier.
 Roe. ⁷ Grumble. ⁸ Line.

Nought rought I whethir of stone or tree,
 Or erthe, or turves though it be,
 Though it were of no rounde stone
 Wrought with squyre and scantilone,¹
 So that the tour were stuffed wel
 With alle richesse temporelle ;
 And thanne that he wolde updresse
 Engyns, bothe more and lesse, 7070
 To cast at us, by every side,
 To bere his goode name wide ;
 Suche sleghtes I shal yow nevene,²
 Barelles of wyne, by sixe or sevene,
 Or gold in sakkis gret plente,
 He shulde soone delyvered be.

“ And if he have noon sich pitaunces,
 Late hym study in equipolences,³
 And late lyes and fallaces,
 If that he wolde deserve oure graces, 7080
 Or we shal bere hym such witnesse
 Of synne, and of his wrecchidnesse,
 And done his loos⁴ so wide renne,
 That al quyk⁵ we shulden hym brenne,
 Or ellis geve hym suche penaunce,
 That is wel wors than the pitaunce.

“ For thou shalt never for no thing
 Kon knowen a-right by her clothing
 The traitours fulle of trecherie,
 But thou her werkis can a-spie. 7090

¹ Scantling or pattern. ² Name. ³ Equivalent expressions, subtleties of logic. ⁴ Notoriety. ⁵ Alive.

And ne hadde the good kepyng be
 Whilom of the Universite,
 That kepith the key of Cristendome,
 We hadde turmented al and some.
 Suche ben the stynkyng prophetis ;
 Nys none of hem, that good prophete is ;
 For they thurgh wikked entencioun,
 The yeer of the incarnacioun
 A thousand and two hundred yeer,
 Fyve and fifty, ferther ne nere, 7100
 Broughten a book, with sory grace,
 To geven ensample in comune place,
 That seide thus, though it were fable,
 ' This is the gospel perdurable,¹
 That fro the Holy Goost is sent.'
 Wel were it worth to bene i-brent.
 Entitled was in such manere
 This book, of which I telle heere.
 There nas no wight in alle Parys,
 Biforne [Owre Lady] at parvys,² 7110
 That they ne myghte buye the booke,
 To copy, if hem talent³ toke ;
 There myght he se, by gret tresoun,
 Fulle many fals comparisoun :
 As moche as thurgh his grete myght,
 Be it of hete or of lyght,
 The sonne sourmounteth the mone,

¹ The title of this book, prepared by the friars, was "The Ever-
 asting Gospel." ² Church porch. Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 310
 Though the text reads, "Oure lady at parvys," the reference is to the
 Church of Notre-Dame, where a school was held. ³ Inclination.

That troublere is, and chaungith soone,
 And the note kernelle the shelle, —
 I scorne not that I yow telle, — 7120
 Right so withouten ony gile
 Sourmounteth this noble evangile
 The word of ony evangelist.'

"And to her title they token Crist;
 And many a such comparisoun,
 Of which I make no mencion,
 Mighte men in that booke fynde,
 Who-so coude of hem have mynde.

"The Universite, that tho was a-slepe
 Gan for to braide,¹ and taken kepe; 7130
 And at the noys the heed upcaste,
 Ne never sithen slept it faste,
 But up it stert, and armes toke
 Agens this false horrible boke,
 Al redy bateil for to make,
 And to the juge the book to take.

"But they that broughten the boke there,
 Hent² it anon away for fere;
 They nolde shewe more a dele,
 But thenne it kept, and kepen wille, 7140
 I'l such a tyme that they may see,
 That they so stronge woxen be,
 That no wyght may hem wel withstonde,
 For by that book they durste not stonde.

"Away they gonne it for to bere,
 For they ne durste not answeere

¹ Start up. ² Snatched.

By exposicioun ne glose
 To that that clerkis wole appose
 Agens the cursednesse, iwys,
 That in that book i-writen is.
 Now wote I not, ne I can not see
 What maner eende that there shal be
 Of alle this that they may hyde ;
 But yit algate they shal abide,
 Til that they may it bet defende ;
 This trowe I best wole be her ende.¹

7150

“ Thus Antecrist abiden we,
 For we ben alle of his meyne,²
 And what man that wole not be so,
 Right soone he shal his lyf forgo.
 We wole a puple upon hym areyse,³
 And thurgh oure gile done hym seise,
 And hym on sharpe speris ryve,
 Or other weyes brynge hym fro lyve,
 But if that he wole folowe, iwys,
 That in oure book i-writen is.

7160

“ Thus mych wole oure book signifie.
 That while Petre hath maistre
 May never John shewe welle his myght.

“ Now have I you declared right
 The menyng of the bark and rynde,
 That makith the entenciouns blynde.
 But now at erst I wote bigynne
 To expowne you the pith withynne,⁴

7170

¹ The book was proscribed and burned by the pope, *circ.* 1255.
 Retinue. ² Excite. ³ A line of the original is omitted here. It
 may be translated, “ By Petre understonde the Pope.”

And the seculers comprehende,
 That Cristes lawe wole defende,
 And shulde it kepen and mayntenen
 Agens hem that alle sustenen
 And falsly to the puple techen,
 That John¹ bitokeneth hem to prechen, 7180
 That ther nys lawe covenable,
 But thilke gospel perdurable,
 That fro the Holy Gost was sent
 To turne folk that ben myswent.

“The strengthe of John they undirstonde,
 The grace in whiche they seie they stonde,
 That doth the synfulle folk converte,
 And hem to Jhesu Crist reverte.

“Fulle many another orribilite
 May men in that booke se, 7190
 That ben comaunded, douteles,
 Agens the lawe of Rome expres ;
 And alle with Antecrist they holden,
 As men may in the book biholden.

“And thanne comaunden they to sleen
 Alle tho that with Petre been ;
 But they shal nevere have that myghte.
 And God to-forne, for strif to fighte,
 That they ne shal ynough fynde,
 That Petres lawe shal have in mynde, 7200
 And evere holde, and so mayntene,
 That at the last it shal be sene,
 That they shal alle come therto,

¹ The friars, thus put in opposition to the pope.

For ought that they can speke or do.
And thilke lawe shal not stonde,
That they by John have undirstonde,
But maugre hem it shal adowne,
And bene brought to confusioun.

“ But I wole stynt of this matere,
For it is wonder longe to here ; 7210
But nadde that ilke book endured,
Of better estate I were ensured,
And freendis have I yit, *pardee*,
That han me sett in gret degre.

“ Of alle this world is emperour
Gyle, my fadir, the trechour,
And emperis my moder is,
Maugre the Holy Gost, iwis.
Oure myghty lynage and owre rowte
Regneth in every regne aboute, 7220
And welle is worthy we mynystres be,
For alle this worlde governe we,
And can the folk so wel disceyve,
That noon oure gile can perceyve ;
And though they done, they dar not saye ;
The sothe dar no wight bywreye.
But he in Cristis wrath hym ledith,
That more than Crist my britheren dredith.

“ He nys no fulle good champioun,
That dredith such similacioun, 7230
Nor that for payne wole refusen
Us to correcte and accusen.
He wole not entremete by right,

Ne have God in his iye-sight,
 And therfore God shal hym punyshe ;
 But me ne rekke of no vice,
 Sithen men us loven comunably,
 And holden us for so worthy,
 That we may folk repreve echoon,
 And we nyl have repref of noon. 7240
 Whom shulden folk worshipen so,
 But us that stynten never mo
 To patren¹ while that folk may us see,
 Though it not so bihynde be ?

“ And where is more wode folye,
 Than to enhaunce chyvalrie,
 And love noble men and gay,
 That joly clothis weren alway ?
 If they be sich folk as they semen,
 So clene, as men her clothis demen, 7250
 And that her wordis folowe her dede,²
 It is gret pite, out of drede,
 For they wole be noon ypocritis.
 Of hym me thynketh gret spite is ;
 I can not love hym on no side.
 But beggers³ with these hodes wide,
 With streight and pale faces lene,
 And greye clothis⁴ not fulle clene,
 But fretted fulle of tatarwagges,⁵
 And highe shoos knopped with dagges, 7260
 That frouncen⁶ lyke a quaile-pipe,⁷

¹ Cf. l. 6796. ² Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 742. ³ The French reads *béguins* (a sort of married monks). ⁴ The Franciscans are meant. ⁵ Clouts. ⁶ Creak. ⁷ Pipe to call quails.

Or botis revelyng as a gype ;¹
 To such folk as I you dyvyse,
 Shulde princes and these lordis wise
 Take alle her londis and her thingis,
 Bothe werre and pees, and governyngis ;
 To such folk shulde a prince hym give,
 That wolde his lyf in honour lyve.

“ And if they be not as they seme,
 That serven thus the world to queme,² 7270
 There wolde I dwelle to disceyve
 The folk, for they shal not perceyve.

“ But I ne speke in no such wise,
 That men shulde humble abit dispise,
 So that no pride ther undir be.
 No man shulde hate, as thynkith me,
 The pore man in sich clothyng.
 But God ne preisith hym no thing,
 That seith he hath the world forsake,
 And hath to worldly glorie hym take, 7280
 And wole of siche delices use.
 Who may that begger wel excuse ?
 That papelard,³ that hym yeldith so,
 And wole to worldly ese go,
 And seith that he the world hath lefte,
 And gredily it grypeth efte,
 He is the hounde, shame is to seyn,
 That to his castyng goth ageyn.

“ But unto you dar I not lye ;
 But myght I felen or asprie, 7290

¹ Wrinkling like a frack. Please. ³ Popeling.

That ye perceyved it no thyng,
 Ye shulde have a stark lesyng,
 Right in youre honde thus to bigynne ;
 I nolde it lette for no synne."

The god lough at the wondir tho,
 And every wight gan laugh also,
 And seide, " Lo, heere a man a-right,
 For to be trusty to every wight ! "

" Fals-semblant," quod Love, " sey to me,
 Sith I thus have avaunced thee, 730a
 That in my court is thi dwellyng,
 And of ribawdis shalt be my king,¹
 Wolt thou wel holden my forwordis ? " ²

F. Semb. " Yhe, sir, from hennes forewardis :
 Hadde never youre fadir, heere biforne,
 Servaunt so trewe, sith he was borne."

Amour. " That is agens alle nature."

F. Semb. " Sir, putte you in that aventure ;
 For though ye borowes³ take of me,
 The sikerer shal ye never be 731c
 For ostages, ne sikernesse,
 Or chartres, for to bere witnesse.
 I take youre silf to recorde heere,
 That men ne may in no manere
 Teren the wolf out of his hide,
 Til he be slayn, bak and side,
 Though men hym bete and al to-defile ;
 What? wene ye that I wole bigile ?
 For I am clothed mekely,

¹ Cf. l. 6071. ² Agreements. ³ Pledges.

Ther undir is alle my trechery ; 7320
 Myn herte chaungith never the mo
 For noon abit, in which I go.

“Though I have chere of symplenesse,
 I am not wery of shrewidnesse.¹
 Myn lemman, Streyned-Abstinence,
 Hath myster of my purveaunce ;²
 She hadde ful longe a-go be deede,
 Nere my councel and my rede ;
 Let hir allone, and you and me.”

And Love answerde, “I trust thee 7330
 Withoute borowe, for I wole noon.”

And Fals-semblant, the thief, anoon,
 Ryght in that ilke same place,
 That hadde of tresoun al his face
 Ryght blak withynne, and white withoute,
 Thankith hym, gan on his knees loute.

Thanne was there nought, but “Every man
 Now to assaut, that sailen³ can,”
 Quod Love, “and that fulle hardyly.”

Thanne armed they hem communly 7340
 Of sich armour as to hem felle.

Whanne they were armed fers and felle,⁴
 They wente hem forth alle in a route,
 And set the castel al aboute ;
 They wille nought away for no drede,
 Tille it so be that they ben dede,
 Or tille they have the castel take.
 And foure batels they gan make,

¹ Cursedness. ² Need of my providence. ³ Assail. ⁴ Cruel

And parted hem in foure anoon,
 And toke her way, and forth they gone, 735c
 The foure gates for to assaile,
 Of whiche the kepers wole not faile ;
 For they ben neithir sike ne dede,
 But hardy folk, and strong in dede.

Now wole I seyn the countynaunce
 Of Fals-semblant, and Abstynaunce,
 That ben to Wikkid-tonge went.

But first they heelde her parlement,
 Whether it to done were,
 To maken hem be knowen there, 736c
 Or elles walken forth disgised.
 But at the laste they devysed,
 That they wolde gone in tapinage,¹
 As it were in a pilgrimage,
 Lyke good and hooly folk unfeyned.

And dame Abstinence-streyned
 Toke on a robe of kamelyne,²
 And gan hir graithe as a bygynne.³
 A large coverechief of threde
 She wrapped alle aboute hir heede, 737c
 But she forgate not hir sawter.
 A peire of bedis eke she bere
 Upon a lace alle of white threde,
 On which that she hir bedes bede ;⁴
 But she ne bought hem never a dele,
 For they were geven her, I wote wele,

¹ Skulking. ² Camel's hair. ³ Clothe as a *béguine*. Cf. l. 6863
 Told her beads

God wote, of a fulle hooly frere,
 That seide he was hir fadir dere,
 To whom she hadde after went,
 Than ony frere of his covent. 7380

And he visited hir also,
 And many a sermoun seide hir to ;
 He nolde lette for man on lyve,
 That he ne wolde hir ofte shryve.
 And wyth so gret devocion
 They made her confession,
 That they had ofte, for the nones,
 Two heedes in one hode at ones.

Of fayre shappe I devyse her the,
 But pale of face sometye was she ; 7390

That false traytoursse untrew
 Was lyke that salowe horse of hewe,
 That in the Apocalips is shewed,
 That signyfyeth tho folke beshrewed,
 That bene al ful of trecherye,
 And pale, through hypocrisie ;
 For on that horse no colour is,
 But onely deed and pale, ywys.

Of such a colour enlangoured
 Was Abstinence, ywys, coloured ; 7400

Of her estate she her repentedede,
 As her vysage representedede.

She had a burdowne al of thefte,
 That Gyle had geve her of hys gefte ;
 And a skryppe ¹ of faynte distresse,

¹ Bag.

That ful was of elengenesse,¹
 And forth she walkede sobrelly :
 And False-semblaunt saynt,² *je vous die*,³
 And as it were for such mistere,⁴
 Done⁵ on the cope of a frere, 7410
 With chere symple, and ful pytous,
 Hys looking was not disdeynous,
 Ne proude, but meke and ful pesyble.
 About his necke he bare a Byble,
 And squierly forth gan he gon ;
 And for to reste hys lymmes upon,
 He had of Treason a potente ;⁶
 As he were feble, hys way he wente.
 But in his sleve he gan to thrynge⁷
 A rasoure sharpe, and wel bytynge, 7420
 That was i-forged in a forge,
 Which that men clepen Coupe-gorge.⁸
 So longe forth her waye they nomen,⁹
 Tyl they to Wycked-tonge comen,
 That at hys gate was syttyng,
 And sawe folke in the way passyng.
 The pylgrymes sawe he faste by
 That beren hem ful mekely,
 And humblely they wyth hym mette.
 Dame Abstinence fyrst hym grette, 7430
 And syth hym False-semblant saluede,
 And he hem ; but he not remeuede,¹⁰
 For he ne dred hem not a dele.

¹ Sadness. ² Girded. ³ I tell you. ⁴ Business.
 Staff. ⁷ Thrust. ⁸ Cut-throat. ⁹ Take. ¹⁰ Removed.

For whan he sawe her faces wele,
 Alwaye in herte hym thoughte so,
 He shulde knowe hem bothe two ;
 For wele he knewe dame Abstynauce,
 But he ne knewe not Constreynauce.
 He ne knewe nat that she was constreyned,
 Ne of her theves lyfe fayned, 744c
 But wende she come of wyl al fre ;
 But she come in another degre ;
 And yf of good wyl she beganne,
 That wyl i-fayled was her thanne.

And False-semblant had he sene also,
 But he knewe nat that he was false.
 Yet false was he, but his falsenesse
 Ne coude he not espye, nor gesse ;
 For Semblant was so slye wrought,
 That falsenesse he ne espyede nought. 745o
 But haddest thou knowen hym beforen,
 Thow woldest on a boke have sworne,
 Whan thou hym saugh in thylke araye,
 That he, that whylome was so gaye,
 And of the daunce Joly Robyn,¹
 Was tho become a Jacobyn.²

But sothly, what-so men hym calle,
 Frere-preachours ² bene goode men alle ;
 Her order wyckedly they beren
 Such Minstreles, yf they weren. 746o
 So bene Augustyns, and Cordylers,

¹ A fit mate of Maid Marian, in a popular interlude. Cf. *Troilus and Cryseyde*, v. 1174. ² Dominican.

And Carmes,¹ and eke Sacked freers,
 And alle freres shodde and bare,
 Though some of hem bene great and square,
 Ful holy men, as I hem deme ;
 Everyche of hem wolde good man seme.

But shalt thou never of apparence
 Sene conclude good consequence
 In none argument, ywys,
 If existence al fayled is. 7474
 For men may fynde alwaye sopheme ²
 The consequence to enveneme,
 Who-so that hath had the subtelte
 The double sentence for to see.

Whan the pylgrymes comen were
 To Wycked-tonge that dwelled there, —
 Her harneys nygh hem was algate, —
 By Wycked-tonge adowne they sate,
 That bade hem nere hym for to come,
 And of tidynges telle him some, 7480
 And sayde hem, “ What case maketh yow
 To come to this place now ? ”

“ Sir,” sayde Strayned-abstinaunce,
 “ We, for to dryen ³ our penaunce,
 With hertes pytous and devoute,
 Are commen as pylgrimes gon aboute ;
 Wel nygh on fote alway we go ;
 Ful dusty ben our heeles two ;
 And thus bothe we ben i-sent
 Throughoute this worlde that is myswent, 7490

¹ Carmelites. ² Sophism. ³ Suffer.

To geve ensample, and preche also.
To fyshen synful men we go,
For other fyshyng ne fyshe we.

"And, syr, for that charite,
As we be wont, herborowe ¹ we crave,
Your lyfe to amende, Christ it save !
And so it shulde you nat displease,
We wolden, yf it were your ease,
A shorte sermon unto you sayne."

And Wicked-tonge answered agayne, 7500
"The house," quod he, "such as ye se,
Shall not be warned ² you for me,
Seye what you lyst, and I wol here."
"Graunt mercy, swete syr dere !"
Quod alderfirst ³ dame Abstynence,
And thus began she her sentence.

Const.-Abstynence. "Sir, the fyrste vertue,
certayne,
The greatest, and mooste soverayne
That may be founde in any man,
For havyng, or for wytte he can, 7510
That is hys tonge to refrayne ; ⁴
Therto ought every wyght him payne.
For it is better styлле be,
Than for to speken harme, *parde !*
And he that herkeneth it gladly,
He is no good man sykerly.

"And, sir, aboven al other synne,
In that arte thou moost gylty inne.

¹ Lodging. ² Refused. ³ First of all. ⁴ Bridle

Thou spake a jape not longe ago, —
 And, sir, that was ryght yvel do, — 7520
 Of a yonge man that here repayrede,
 And never yet thys place apayrede.
 Thou saydest he awayted nothyng,
 But to deceyve Fayre-welcomyng.
 Ye sayde nothyng soth of that ;
 But, sir, ye lye ; I tel you plat ;¹
 He ne cometh no more, ne goth, *parde* !
 I trowe ye shal hym never se.

“ Fayre-welcomyng in prison is,
 That ofte hath played with you er thys 7530
The fayrest games that he coude,
 Withoute fylthe, styl² or loude ;
 Nowe dare he not himselfe solace.
 Ye han also the man do chase,
 That he dare neyther come ne go.

“ What meveth you to hate hym so,
 But properly your wycked thought,
 That many a false leasyng hath thought ?
 That meveth youre foole eloquence,
 That jangleth ever in audience, 7540
 And on the folke areyseth³ blame,
 And doth hem dishonour and shame,
 For thyng that maye have no prevyng,
 But lykelynesse, and contrivyng.
 For I dare sayne, that Reason demeth.
 It is not al soth thyng that semeth,
 And it is synne to controve⁴

¹ Flatly (Fr. *plat*, Ger. *platt*). ² Still ³ Exciteth. ⁴ Invent (Fr. *controuver*).

Thynge that is for to reprove ;
Thys wote ye wele. And, syr, therfore
Ye arne to blame the more. 7550

And, nathlesse, he recketh lyte ;
He geveth nat nowe therof a myte ;
For yf he thoughte harme, parfaye,
He wolde come and gone al daye ;
He coude not himselfe abstene.

“ Nowe cometh he not, and that is sene,
For he ne taketh of it no cure,
But yf it be through aventure,
And lasse than other folke algate.
And thou her watchest at the gate, 7560
With speare in thyne arest alwaye ;
There muse, musard,¹ al the daye ;
Thou wakest nyght and daye for thought ;
Iwys thy traveyle is for nought.
And Jelosy, withouten fayle,
Shal never quyte the thy travayle.

“ And skath is that Fayre-welcomyng,
Wythoute any trespassyng,
Shal wrongfully in prison be,
There wepeth and languysheth he. 7570
And though thou never yet, ywys,
Agyltest man no more but thys, —
Take not a-greefe, — it were worthy
To putte the out of thys bayly,
And afterwarde in prison lye,
And fettre the tyl that thou dye ;

¹ Muser.

For thou shalt for this synne dwelle
 Right in the devels ers of helle,¹
 But-if that thou repente thee."

"Mafay, thou liest falsly!" quod he.² 758c
 "What? welcome, with myschaunce now!
 Have I therfore i-herberd yowe
 To seye me shame, and eke reprove?
 With sory happe to youre bihove,
 Am I to day youre herbergere!
 Go, herber³ yow elles-where than heere,
 That han a lyer callede me.
 Two tregetours⁴ art thou and he,
 That in myn hous do me this shame,
 And for my sothe-saugh ye me blame. 7590

"Is this the sermoun that ye make?
 To alle the develles I me take,
 Or elles, God, thou me confounde,
 But er men diden this castel founde,
 It passith not ten daies or twelve,
 But it was tolde right to my selve,
 And as they seide, right so tolde I,
 He kyste the rose pryvyly.

"Thus seide I now, and have seid yore;
 I not⁵ where he dide ony more. 7600
 Why shulde men sey me such a thyng,
 If it ne hadde bene gabbyng?
 Ryght so seide I, and wole seye yit;
 I trowe I liede not of it,

¹ The coarseness is English. Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 11,732
That is, Wikked-tonge. ³ Lodge. ⁴ Tricksters. ⁵ Know not.

And with my bemes¹ I wole blowe
To alle neighboris a-rowe,
How he hath bothe comen and gone."

Tho spake Fals-semblant right anone,
"Alle is not gospel, oute of doute,
That men seyn in the towne aboute ; 7610

Ley no deef ere to my spekyng,
I swere yow, sir, it is gabbyng.
I trowe ye wote wel certeynly,
That no man loveth hym tenderly,
That seith hym harme, if he wote it,
Alle be he never so pore of wit.

And soth is also sikerly, —
This knowe ye, sir, as wel as I, —
That lovers gladly wole visiten
The places there her loves habiten. 7620

"This man yow loveth and eke honoureth ;
This man to serve you laboureth ;
And clepith you his freend so deere,
And this man makith you good chere,
And every where that you meteth,
He yow saloweth, and he you greteth.
He preseth not so ofte, that ye
Ought of his come² encombred be ;
Ther presen other folk on yow
Fulle ofter than he doth now 7630

And if his herte hym streynede so
Unto the rose for to go,
Ye shulde hym sene so ofte, nede,³

Trumpets. Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 9010. ² Coming. ³ Necessary.

That ye shulde take hym with the dede ;¹
 He cowde his comyng not forbere,
 Though ye hym thirllid² with a spere ;
 It nere not thanne as it is now.

“But trustith wel, I swere it yow,
 That it is clene out of his thought.
 Sir, certis, he ne thenkith it nought ; 7640
 No more ne doth Faire-welcomyng,
 That sore abieth³ al this thing.
 And if they were of oon assent,
 Fulle soone were the rose hent,
 The maugre youres,⁴ wolde be.

“And, sir, of o thing herkeneth me :
 Sith ye this man, that loveth yow,
 Han seid such harme and shame, now
 Witeth wel, if he gessed it,
 Ye may wel demen in youre wit, 7650
 He nolde no thyng love you so,
 Ne callen you his freende also,
 But nyght and day he wole wake,⁵
 The castelle to destroie and take,
 If it were soth as ye devise ;
 Or some man in some maner wise
 Might it warne hym everydele,
 Or by hym-silf perceyven wele.
 For sith he myghte not come and gone
 As he was whilom wont to done, 7660
 He myght it sone wite and see ;

¹ Legal term: “in the manner.” ² Pierced. ³ Suffereth for
 In spite of you. ⁴ Watch.

But now alle other wise wote he.
 Thanne have ye, sir, al outerly
 Deserved helle, and jolyly
 The deth of helle douteles,
 That thrallen folk so gilteles."

Fals-semblant proveth so this thing,
 That he can noon answeryng,
 And seth alwey such apparaunce,
 That nygh he fel in repentaunce, 7670
 And seide hym, "Sir, it may wel be ;
 Semblant, a good man semen ye ;
 And, Abstinence, fulle wise ye seme ;
 Of o talent¹ you bothe I deme.
 What counceil wole ye to me geven ?"

" Ryght heere anon thou shalt be shryven
 And sey thy synne withoute more ;
 Of this shalt thou repente sore ;
 For I am prest, and have pouste,²
 To shryve folk of most dignyte 7680
 That ben as wide as world may dure.
 Of alle this world I have the cure,
 And that hadde never yit persoun,
 Ne vicarie of no maner toun.

" And, God wote, I have of thee
 A thosand tyme more pitee
 Than hath thi preest parochial,
 Though he thy freend be special.
 I have avauntage, in o wise,
 That youre prelatis ben not so wise, 7690

¹ Inclination. ² Power.

Ne half so lettred as am I,
 I am licenced boldely,
 In divinitie for to rede,
 And to confessen, out of drede.
 If ye wolle you nowe confesse;
 And leave your synnes more and lesse,
 Without abode, knele downe anon,
 And ye shal have absolucion." ¹

THE COURT OF LOVE.²

WITH tymeros hert and tremlyng hand o!
 drede,
 Of cunning naked, bare of eloquence.
 Unto the flour of poort in womanhede
 I write, as he that none intelligence
 Of metres hath, ne floures of sentence ;
 Sauf that me list my writing to convey,
 In that I can to please her hygh nobley.

The blosmes fresshe of Tullius ³ garden soote
 Present them not, my matere for to borne : ⁴
 Poemys of Virgile taken here no rote, 10
 Ne crafte of Galfride ⁵ may not here sojorne :

¹ The version ends at line 12,563 of the French poem, leaving 9510 lines of the original untranslated. The scene above, cut short in the translation, ends thus in the original : Wikked-tunge kneels, Abstinence chokes him with a handkerchief twisted about his throat, causing his tongue to protrude, and this is immediately cut off by False-semblant. At the end of the poem the lover has obtained the Rose, for which he thanks Venus, Cupid, and all the barons who had helped him. Day then arrives, and the dreamer awakes from his sleep. ² Mr. Skeat says that the original manuscript of this poem is now in the library of Trinity College, and that it was written at about 1500, the poem being more unlike Chaucer than any other attributed to him. ³ Cicero's. ⁴ Brighten. ⁵ Geoffrey de Vinsauf, author of a work on poetry.

Why nam I cunning? O wel may I morne,
For lak of science that I cannot write
Unto the princes of my life aright.

No termys digne unto her excellence,
So is she sprong of noble stirpe¹ and high.
A world of honoure and of reverence
There is in her, this wille I testifie.
Callyope, thowe sister wise and sly,
And thowe Mynerva, guyde me with thy grace,
That langage rude my mater not deface. 21

Thy suger dropes swete of Elicon
Distill in me, thowe gentle Muse, I pray;
And the, Melpomene, I calle anone,
Of ignoraunce the miste to chace away;
And give me grace so for to write and sey,
That she, my lady, of her worthinesse,
Accepte in gree² this litill short tretesse,
That is entituled thus, The Courte of Love.

And ye that bene metriciens me excuse, 30
I you beseche for Venus sake above;
For whate I mene in this ye nede not muse:
And yf so be my lady it refuse
For lak of ornat speche, I wold be woo,
That I presume to her to writen soo.

But myne entent and all my besy cure
Is for to write this tretesse, as I can,
Unto my lady, stable, true, and sure,
Feithfull and kynde, sith first that she began
Me to accept in service as her man:³ 40

¹ Race. ² Favor. ³ Liege man.

To her be all the pleasure of this boke,
That, when her like, she may it rede and loke.

When I was yong, at eighteen yere of age,
Lusty and light, desirous of plesaunce,
Approchyng on full sadde ¹ and ripe corage,
Love arted ² me to do myn observaunce
To his astate, and doon hym obeysaunce,
Commaundyng me the Courte of Love to see,
A lite beside the Mounte of Citharee,

There Citherea ³ goddesse was and quene 50
Honowred highly for her majestie ;
And eke her sonne, the myghty god, I wene,
Cupye the blynde, that for his dignyte
A thousand lovers worship on there kne ;
There was I bidde, in payn of deth, to pere,
By Mercury, the wynged messengere.

So than I wente be straunge and ferre con
trees,

Enquiryng ay whate costes that to it drewe
The Courte of Love: and thiderward, as bees,
At last I se the peple gan pursue: 60
Anon me thoughte som wight was there that
knewe

Where that the courte was holden, ferre or nye,
And aftir them fulle faste I gan me hie.

Anone as I them overtoke, I seide,
"Haile, frendes ! whider purpose ye to wende ?"
"Forsothe," quod one that aunswerede lich 3
mayde,

¹ Grave. ² Gave me skill. ³ That is, Venus.

"To Loves Courte nowe goo we, gentill frend."

"Where is that place," quod I, "my felowe
hende?"¹

"At Citheron, sir," seid he, "without dowe,
The Kyng of Love, and all his noble rowte, 70

"Dwellyng withynne a castell ryally."

So than apace I jornede forth amonge,

And as he seide, so fond I there truly.

For I behelde the towres high and stronge,

And highe pynacles, large of hight and longe,

With plate of gold bespredde on every side,

And presious stones, the stone werke for to hide.

No saphir Ind, no rube riche of price,

There lakkede thanne, nor emeraude so grene,

Bales Turkes,² ne thing to my devise 80

'That may the castell maken for to shene :

All was as bright as sterres in wynter bene ;

And Phebus shone, to make his pease agayn

For trespace doon to high estates tweyne,

Venus and Mars, the god and goddesse clere,

When he them founde³ in armes cheyned faste

Venus was than full sad of harte and chere.

But Phebus bemes, streight as is the maste,

Upon the castell gynith he to caste,

To please the lady, princesse of that place, 90

In sign he loketh aftir Loves grace.

For there nys god in Heven or Helle, iwis,

But he hath ben right soget unto Love :

Love, Pluto, or whatesoever he is,

Courteous. ² Bastard rubies. ³ See Homer's *Odyssey*, viii. 266

Ne creature in erth, or yet above ;
 Of thise the revers may no wight approve.
 But furthermore, the castell to discrive,
 Yet sawe I never none so large and high.

For unto Heven it streccheth, I suppose,
 Withynne and oute depeynted wonderly, 106
 With many a thousand daisyces, rede as rose,
 And white also, this sawe I verely ;
 But whate tho deyses myghte do signifie,
 Can I not telle, sauf that the quenes floure,
 Alceste, yit was that kepte there her sojoure,

Which under Venus lady was and quene,
 And Admete kyng and soverayn of that place,
 To whom obeide the ladyes gode ninetene,¹
 With many a thowsand other, bright of face.
 And yonge men fele came forth with lusty pace,
 And aged eke, there homage to dispose ; 111
 But whate they were, I cowde not well disclose.

Yet nere and nere furth in I gan me dresse
 Into an halle of noble apparayle,
 With arras² spred, and cloth of gold, I gesse,
 And other silke of esier availe :³
 Under the cloth of there estate⁴ saunz faile,
 The kyng and quene ther sat, as I beheld :
 It passed joye of Helise the feld.⁵

There saintes⁶ have there comyng and resort,
 To seen the kyng so ryally beseen, 121
 In purple clad, and eke the quene in sort :

¹ Cf. *Legende of Goode Women*, l. 283. ² Tapestry, named from Arras in Artois. ³ That is, less cost. ⁴ According with their estate ⁵ The field of Elysium ⁶ That is, martyrs for love.

And on there hedes sawe I crownes twayn,
 With stones frett, so that it was no payne
 Withouten mete and drynke to stand and see
 The kinges honour and the ryaltie.

And for to trete of states with the kyng,
 That bene of counsell cheef, and with the
 quene,

The kyng had Daunger nere to hym standyng,
 The Quene of Love, Disdeyne, and that was
 sene :

130

For by the feith I shall to God, I wene
 Was never straunger none in her degree,
 Than was the quene in castyng of her ye.

And as I stode perceyvyng her apart,
 And eke the bemes shynyng of her yen,
 Me thoughte thay were shapyn liche a darte,
 Sherpe and persyng, smale and streight as line :
 And all her here it shone as gold so fyne,
 Disshivill, crispe, downe hyngyng at her bak
 A yarde in length :¹ and smoothly than I
 spake :

140

“O brighte Regina, who made the so faire ?
 Who made thy colour vermelet² and white ?
 Where woneth³ that god ? howe fer above the
 eyre ?

Grete was his crafte, and grete was his delite.
 Now marvel I nothing that ye do hight
 The Quene of Love, and occupie the place
 Of Cithare : nowe, swete lady ! thi grace.”

¹ Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 1050. ² Vermilion. ³ Dwelleth.

In mewet spake I so that nought asterolte,
 By no condicion, worde that myghte be harde,
 But in myne inward thought I gan adverte, 150
 And oft I seide, "My witte is dulle and harde :"
 For with her bewtie, thus, God wot, I ferde
 As doth the man i-ravissshed with sighte,
 Whenne I beheld her cristall yen so brighte,

No respect havying whatte was best to doon,
 Till right anon, beholding here and there,
 I spied a frend of myne, and that full sone,
 A gentilwoman, was the chamberer
 Unto the quene, that hote, as ye shall here,
 Philobone, that loved wel alle her life : 160
 Whan she me sey, she led me furth as blyfe ;

And me demaunded howe and in whate wise
 I thider come, and what myne erand was.
 "To sene the courte," quod I, "and alle the
 guyse ;

And eke to sue for pardon and for grace,
 And mercy aske for all my grete trespase,
 That I none erst come to the Courte of Love :
 Forgeve me this, ye goddes all above."

"That is well seid," quod Philobone, "in-
 dede :

But were ye not assomoned to apere 170
 By Mercurius, for that is all my drede."

"Yis, gentill feire," quod I, "nowe am I
 here,

Ye, yit whate thowe, though that be true, my
 dere ?"

"Of youre fre wille ye shuld have come unsent
For ye dide not, I deme ye wille be shent.¹

"For ye that reigne in youth and lustinesse,
Pampired with ease, and joyless in youre age,
Youre dewtie is, as ferre as I canne guesse,
To Loves Courte to dresen youre viage,
As sone as Nature maketh you so sage 180
That ye may knowe a woman from a swan,
Or whanne youre fote is growen half a spanne.

"But sith that ye, be wilfulle necligence,
This eighteene yere have kepte youreself at
large,
The gretter is your trespase and offence,
And in youre nek you motte bere all the
charge :

For better were ye ben withouten barge
Amydde the se in tempest and in rayne,
Than byden here, receyvyng woo and payne

"That ordeyned is for suche as them absente
Fro Loves Courte by yeres long and fele. 191
I ley my lyf ye shalle full sone repente ;
For Love wille reyve youre coloure, lust, and
hele :

Eke ye moste bayte on many an hevy mele :
No force, iwis, I stired you long agoone
To drawe to courte," quod litell Philobon.

"Ye shalle well se howe rowhe² and angry
face
The Kyng of Love will shewe, when ye hym se.

¹ Discomfited. ² Rough.

By myne advyse knele downe and aske hym
grace,

Eschewing perell and adversitee ; 200

For welle I wot it wolle none other be, *

Comforte is none, ne counsell to youre ease ;

Why wille ye thanne the Kyng of Love dis-
plese ? ”

“ O mercy God,” quod Iche, “ I me repent,
Caytif and wrecche in hert, in wille and thought !
And aftir this shall be myne hole entent
To serve and please, howe dere that love be
bought : ¹

Yit sith I have myne owen penaunce isought,
With humble sprite shall I it receyve,
Though that the Kyng of Love my life be-
reyve. 210

“ And though the fervent loves qualite
In me did never worche truly yit I
With all obeysaunce and humilite,
And benigne harte, shall serve hym till I dye :
And he that lorde of myghtes, grete and high,
Right as hym lyst me chastice and correcte
And punysshe me, with trespase thus enfecte.” .

Thise wordes seid, she caught me by the
lap, ²

And ledde me furth intill a temple round, 219
Both large and wyde : and as my blessed hap
And gode adventure was, right sone I founde
A tabernacle reised from the grounde,

¹ Suffered for. ² Lappet.

Where Venus sat, and Cupide by her side,
Yit half for drede I gan my visage hide.

And eft agayn I loked and beheld,
Seyng full sundry peple in the place,
And myster¹ folke, and som that myght not
welde²

There lymmes wele, me thought a wounder
case ;

The temple shone with wyndowes all of glasse,
Bright as the day, with many a feire ymage ; 230
And there I sey the freshe queene of Cartage,

Dydo, that brent her bewtie for the love
Of fals Eneas ; and the weymyntyng
Of hir Anelida, true as turtill dove,
To Arcite fals ; and there was in peyntyng
Of many a prince, and many a doughty kyng,
Whose marterdom was shewed aboute the
walles ;

And howe that feale⁸ for love hadde suffred
falles.

But sore I was abasshed and stonyed 239
Of all thoo folke that there were in that tide ;⁴
And than I askede where thay had woned :
" In dyvers courtes," quod she, " here beside."
In sondry clothing, mantil-wise full wide,
They were arrayed, and did there sacrifice
Unto the god and goddesse in there guyse.

" Lo ! yonder folk," quoth she, " that knele
in blewe,

¹ Trade ² Wield. Many ⁴ Time.

Thay were the coloure ay and ever shalle,
 In signe thay were and ever wille be true
 Withouten chaunge : and soothly yonder alle
 That ben in blak, and mornyng cry and calle
 Unto the goddes, for there loves bene 251
 Som ferre, som dede, som all to-sherpe and
 kene."

"Ye than," quod I, "what done thise prestes
 here,

Nonnes and hermytes, freres, and alle thoo
 That sit in white, in russet, and in grene?"

"Forsoth," quod she, "thay waylen of there
 woo."

"O mercy lord! may thay so come and goo
 Frely to court and have suche libertie?"

"Ye, men of eche condicion and degree,

"And women eke : for truly there is none
 Excepcion made, ne never was ne may : 261

This courte is ope and fre for everychone,

The Kyng of Love he wille nat say hem nay :

He takith all, in poore or riche arraye,

That mekely sewe unto his excellence

With all there harte and all there reverence."

And, walkyng thus aboute with Philobone,

I se where come a messengere in hie

Streight from the kyng, which let commaunde,
 anon,

Throughoute the courte to make an ho and
 crye : 270

"Alle newe-come folke abide! and wote ye
 whye?

The kynges luste is for seen youe sone ;
Come nere, let se ! his wille mote nede be
done."

Than gan I me presente tofore the kyng,
Tremelyng for fere, with visage pale of hewe,
And many a lover with me was knelyng,
Abasshed sore, till unto the tyme thay knewe
The sentence gove of his entent full trewe :
And at the laste the kyng hath me beholde
With sterne visage, and seid, "Whate doth this
olde, 280

"Thus ferre istope¹ in yeres, come so late
Unto the courte ?" "Forsoth, my liege,"
quod I,

"An hundred tyme I have ben at the gate
Afore this time, yet coude I never espye
Of myne acqueyntaunce eny with myne ye ;
And shamefastnes away me gane to chace ;
But nowe I me submytte unto your grace."

"Well ! all is perdoned, with condicion
That thowe be trewe from hensforth to thy
myght,

And serven Love in thyne entencion : 290
Swere this, and thanne, as fer as it is right,
Thowe shalte have grace here in my quenes
sight."

"Yis, by the feith I owe youre crowne, I swere,
Though Deth therfore me thirlith² with his
spere."

And whan the kyng had sene us everychone,
 He let commaunde an officer in hie
 To take oure feith,¹ and shewe us, one by one,
 The statutis of the courte full besyly :
 Anon the boke was leide before her ye, 299
 To rede and se whate thyng we most observe
 In Loves Courte, till that we dye and sterue.

And for that I was lettred, there I redde
 The statutis hole of Loves Courte and halle :
 The first statute that on the boke was spred
 Was, To be true in thought and dedes alle
 Unto the Kyng of Love, the lord ryalle ;
 And to the Quene, as feithfull and as kynde,
 As I coude thynke with harte, and wille, and
 mynde.

The secunde statute, Secretely to kepe
 Councell of love, nat blowyng every where 310
 All that I knowe, and let it synk and flete ;²
 It may not sowne in every wightes ere :
 Exilyng slaunder ay for dred and fere,
 And to my lady, which I love and serve,
 Be true and kynde, her grace for to deserve.

The thridde statute was clerely write also,
 Withouten chaunge to lyve and dye the same,
 None other love to take, for wele ne woo,
 For blynde delite, for earnest nor for game :
 Withoute repent for laughyng or for grame,³
 To biden still in full perseveraunce : 321
 Al this was hole the kynges ordynaunce.

Receive our allegiance. ² Float. ³ Sorrow.

The fourth statute, To purchase¹ ever to
here,²

And stiren folke to love, and beten³ fire
On Venus awter, here aboute and there,
And preche to them of love and hote desire,
And telle howe love will quyten wel there hire :
This muste be kepte ; and loth me to displease :
If love be wroth, passe ; for thereby is an ease.

The fifth statute, Not to be daungerous,⁴ 333
Yf that a thought wold reyye me of my slepe :
Nor of a sight be over squymouse ;⁵
And so veryeuly this statute was to kepe,
To turne and walowe in my bed and wepe,
When that my lady, of her crueltie,
Wold from her harte exilyn all pyte.

The sixte statute, it was for me to use
Alone to wander, voyde of company,
And on my ladys bewtie for to muse,
And to thinke no force to lyve or dye ; 340
And eft agayn to thynke the remedy,
Howe to her grace I myght anon attayne,
And telle my woo unto my souverayne.

The seventh statute was, To be pacient,
Whether my lady joyfull were or wroth ;
For wordes glad or hevy, dilygent,
Wheder that she me helden lefe or loth :
And hereupon I put was to myn othe,
Hir for to serve, and lowly to obey,
And shewing my chere, ye, twenty sith⁶ aday.

¹ Obtain (proselytes). ² Her. ³ Keep up. ⁴ Angry ⁵ Long
ag. ⁶ Times.

The eighth statute to my remembraunce 351
 Was, To speke and praye my lady dere,
 With hourelly laboure and grete attendaunce,
 Me for to love with all her harte entiere,
 And me desire and make me joyfull chere,
 Right as she is, surmountyng every faire,¹
 Of bewtie well,² and gentill debonayre.

The ninth statute, with lettres writ of gold,
 This was the sentence, How that I and alle
 Shuld ever drede to be to overbolde 360
 Her to displease ; and truly so I shall ;
 But ben content for thyng that may befall,
 And mekely take her chastisement and yerde,⁸
 And to offende her ever ben aferd.

The tenth statute was, Egally discerne
 Bytwene thy lady and thyn abilitee,
 And thynke thyself arte never like to yerne,⁴
 By right, her mercy nor of equite,
 But of her grace and womanly pitee ;
 For though thy self be noble in thy strene,⁵ 370
 A thowsand fold more nobill is thy quene.

Thy lives lady and thy souverayn,
 That hath thyne harte all hole in governaunce,
 Thow maist no wise hit taken to disdayne,
 To put the humbly at her ordynaunce,
 And gife her free the reyne of her plesaunce ;
 For libertie ys thing that women loke,⁴
 And truly ellis the mater is a croke.

The eleventh statute, Thy signes for to knowe

¹ Fair one. ² Source. ³ Rod. ⁴ Desire. ⁵ Pedigree.

With ie and fynger, and with smyles softe, 380
 And iowe to kowch, and alway for to showe,
 For dred of spies, for to wynken ofte ·
 But secretly to bring up a sigh alofte,
 And eke beware of overmoche resorte ;
 For that paraventure spilleth ¹ all thy sporte.

The twelfth statute remember to observe :
 For alle the payne thou haste for love and wo,
 All is to lite her mercy to deserve,
 Thow muste thyнке, where ever thou ride or
 goo,²

And mortall woundes suffer thou also, 390
 All for her sake, and thyнке it wel beset,
 Upon thy love, for it may be no bette.

The thirteenth statute, Whilom is to thyнке
 Whate thyng may best thy lady lyke and please,
 And in thyne hartes botom let it synke :
 Som thing devise, and take for thyne ease,
 And send it her, that may her harte pease :³
 Some hert, or ryng, or letre, or devise,
 Or precious stone ; but spare not for no price.

The fourteenth statute eke thou shalt assaye
 Firmely to kepe the moste parte of thy life : 401
 Wisshe that thy lady in thyne armes laye,
 And nyghtly dreame thou hast thy nyghtes harte
 wife

Swetely in armes, straynyng her as blife :
 And whanne thou seest it is but fantasye,
 Se that thou syng not over merily,

¹ Destrovethe. ² Walk. ³ Appease.

For to moche joye hath oft a wofull end.
 It longith ¹ eke this statute for to holde,
 To deme thy lady evermore thy frende,
 And thynke thyself in no wise a cocold. 410
 In every thing she doth but as she shulde :
 Construe the beste, beleve no tales newe,
 For many a lie is told, that semyth full trewe.

But thinke that she, so bounteous and fayre,
 Cowde not be fals : imagyne this algate ;
 And thinke that tonges wykked wold her ap-
 paiere,
 Sklaundryng her name and worshipfull estate,
 And lovers true to setten at debate :
 And though thou seest a fawte ² right at thyne
 ye,

Excuse it blive, and glose ³ it pretily. 420

The fifteenth statute, Use to swere and stare,
 And counterfete a lesyng hardely,
 To save thy ladys honoure every whare,
 And put thyself for her to fighte boldely :
 Sey she is gode, vertuous, and gostely,
 Clere of entent, and harte, and thought and
 wille ;

And argue not for reson ne for skille ⁴

Agayne thy ladys plesire ne entent,
 For love wille not be counterpleted ⁵ indede :
 Sey as she seith, than shalte thoue not be shent,
 The crowe is white ; ye truly, so I rede. ⁶ 431

¹ Belongeth. ² Fault (Fr. *faute*). ³ Palliate. ⁴ Cause ⁵ Ar-
 gued against. ⁶ Advise.

And ay whate thyng that she the wille forbidde,
Eschewe all that, and give her soverentie,
Hir appetite folowe in all degree.

The sixteenth statute, kepe it yf thow may :
Seven sith¹ at nyght thy lady for to please,
And seven at mydnyght, seven at morowe day,
And drynke a cawdell erly for thyne ease.
Do this and kepe thyne hede from all dyssease,
And wyne the garland here of lovers alle, 440
That ever come in courte, or ever shalle.

Full fewe, thynke I, this statute hold and kepe ;
But truly this my reason giveth me fele,²
That som lovers shulde rather fall aslepe,
Than take on hand to please so ofte and wele.
There lay none othe to this statute adele,
But kepe who myght as gave hym his corage :
Nowe get this garlant lusty folke of age. 448

Nowe wyne whoo may, ye lusty folke of youth,
This garland fressh, of floures red and white,
Purpill and blewe, and colours ful uncowth,³
And I shall crowne hym kyng of all delite !
In all the courte there was not, to my sight,
A lover twewe, that he ne was adrede,
When he expresse hath hard the statute redde.

The seventeenth statute, When age approach-
ith on,
And lust is leide, and all the fire is queynt,
As fresshly than thowe shalte begynne to
fonne,⁴

¹ Times. ² Many ³ New. ⁴ Be fond.

And dote in love, and all her ymage paynte
 In the remembraunce, till thow begynne to
 faynte, 460

As in the firste season thyne hart beganne :
 And her desire, though thowe ne may ne can
 Perfourme thy lyvyng actuell, and lust ;
 Regester this in thy remembraunce :
 Eke whan thow maist not kepe thy thing from
 rust,

Yet speke and talk of pleasaunt dalyaunce ;
 For that shall make thyne harte rejoyse and
 daunce,

And when thou maist no more the gam as-
 saye,

The statute bidde the praye for hem that maye.

The eighteenth statute, holy to commende,
 To please thy lady, is, That thow eschewe 471
 With sluttisshnesse thyself for to offende ;
 Be jolif, fressh, and fete,¹ with thinges newe,
 Courtly with maner, this is all thy due,
 Gentill of porte, and loving clenlynnesse ;²
 This is the thing that liketh³ thi maistresse.

And not to wander liche a dulled asse,
 Ragged and torn, disguysed in array,
 Rybaude in speech, or oute of mesure passe,
 Thy bounde excedyng ; thynk on this alway :
 For women been of tender hartes aye, 481
 And lightly sette there plesure in a place ;
 When they misthinke, they lightly let it passe.

¹ Neat. ² Purity. ³ Pleaseth.

The nineteenth statute, Mete and drynke forgete :

Eche other day, se that thow faste for love,
For in the courte thei live withouten mete,
Sauf suche as comyth from Venus all above ;
Thei take none heed, in payne of grete re-
prove,

Of mete and drynke, for that is all in vayn,
Onely they live be sight of there soverayne.

The twentieth statute, last of everychone, 491
Enrolle it in thyn hartes privite ;
To wring and waile, to turne, and sigh and
grone,

When that thy lady absent is from the ;
And eke revewe the wordes alle that she
Bitwene you twayn hath seid, and all the chere
That the hath made thy lives lady dere.

And se thyne harte in quiete ne in rest
Sojorne till tyme thowe sene thy lady eft ;
But where she wonne be south, or est, or west,
With all thy force, now se it be not left : 501
Be diligent, till tyme thy life be reft,
In that thowe maist, thy lady for to see ;
This statute was of old antiquite.

An officer of high auctorite,
Cleped Rigour, made us to swere anon :
He nas corrupt with parcialyte,
Favour, prayer, ne gold that clierely shone ;
“ Ye shalle,” quod he, “ nowe sweren here
echone,

Yong and olde, to kepe, in that ye maye, 510
The statutes truly, all aftir this day."

O God, thought I, hard is to make this oth !
But to my pouer shall I them observe ;
In all this world nas mater half so loth
To swere for all ; for though my body sterve.
I have no myght them hole for to reserve.
But herkyn nowe the cace how it befell :
After my othe was made, the trouth to telle,

I turned leves, lokyng on this boke, 519
Where other statutes were of women shene ;
And right furthwith Rigour on me gan loke
Full angrily, and seid unto the quene
I traitour was, and charged me let bene :
"There may no man," quod he, "the statute
knoue,

That long to women, hie degree ne lowe.

"In secrete wise they kepten ben full close,
They sowne ¹ ecchone to libertie, my frend ;
Pleasaunt thay be, and to there owen purpose ;
There wote no wight of them, but God and fend.
Ne naught shall witte, unto the worldes ende.
The quene hath gove me charge, in payne to
dye, 531

Never to rede ne sen them with myne ye.

"For men shall not so nere of counsell ben
With womanhede, ne knowen of her guyse,
Ne whate they thinke, ne of there wit thengyne ;
I me reporte to Salamon the wise,

¹ Tend. ² The genius.

And mighty Sampson, which begyled thries
 With Dalida was ; he wot that, in a throwe,
 There may no man statute of women knowe.

“For it peraventure may right so befalle, 540
 That they be bounde by nature to disceyve,
 And spyne, and wepe, and sugre strewe on
 galle,

The hart of man to ravisshe and to reyve,
 And whet there tong as sharp as swerd or
 gleyve :¹

It may betide, this is there ordynaunce,
 So muste thei lowly done the observaunce,

“And kepe the statute goven them of Kynde,”
 Of suche as love have gove hem in there life.
 Men may not wete why turneth every wynde,
 Nor waxen wise, nor ben inquisytyf 550
 To knowe secret of mayde, widue, or wife ;
 For thai there statutes have to them reserved,
 And never man to knowe them hath deserved.

“Now dresse you furth, the god of Love you
 guyde !”

Quod Rigour than, “and seke the temple
 brighte,

Of Citherea goddesse, here beside ;
 Beseche her, by enfluence and myghte
 Of all her vertue, you to teche arighte, 558
 Howe for to serve youre ladis, and to please,
 Ye that ben sped,² and set your hart at ease.

“And ye that ben unpurveied, praye her eke

¹ Glave. ² Nature. ³ Provided with a sweet heart.

Comforte you sone with grace and destine,
That ye may sette youre harte there ye maye
like,

In suche a place, that it to love may be
Honoure and worship, and filicite
To you for ay. Now goth by one assente."
"Graunt mercy, sir!" quod we, and furth we
wente

Devoutly, soft and esy pace, to se
Venus, the goddessse, ymage all of golde: 569
And there we founde a thousand on there kne,
Som fressh and feire, som dedely to beholde,
In sondry mantils newe, and some were olde,
Som paynted were with flames rede as fire,
Outward to shewe there inwarde hote desire:

With dolefull chere, ful feele¹ in there com-
playnt

Criede, "Lady Venus, rewe upon oure sore!
Receyve oure billes,² with teres al bedreynt;
We maye not wepe, there is no more in store,
But woo and payne us frettith more and more:
Thow blisseful planet, lovers sterre so shene,
Have rowth on us, that sighe and carefull
bene;

581

"And ponysshe, lady, grevously, we praye,
The false untrew,³ with counterfete plesaunce,
That made there othe be trewe to live or dye,
With chere assured, and with countenaunce;
And fals'y now thay foten⁴ loves daunce,

¹ Many (Ger. *viel*). ² Petitions. ³ Untrue ones. ⁴ Foot.

Baren of rewth, untrue of that they seid,
Now that there lust and plesire is alleide."

Yit eft again, a thousand milion,
Rejoycing, love, ledyng there life in blis: 590
They seid, "Venus, redresse of al divysion,
Goddesse eternal, thy name ihired¹ is!
By loves bond is knyht all thing, iwis,
Best unto best, the erth to water wanne,
Birde unto bird, and woman unto manne ;²

"This is the life of joye that we ben in,
Resemblyng life of heavenly paradyse ;
Love is exiler ay of vice and synne ;
Love maketh hartes lusty to devise ;
Honoure and grace have thay in every wise,
That ben to loves lawe obedyent ; 601
Love makith folke benigne and diligent,

"Ay steryng them to drede vice and shame :
In there degree it maketh them honorable ;
And swete it is of love to bere the name,
So that his love be feithfull, true and stable :
Love prunyth hym, to semen amyable ;
Love hath no faute, there it is exercised,
But sole with them that have all love dispised.

"Honoure to the, celestiall and clere 610
Goddesse of love, and to thy celcitude,³
That gevest us light so ferre downe from thi
spere,
Persing our hartes with thi pulcritude⁴ !

¹ Praised. ² Cf. Boethius, *De Consolatione*, book ii., met. 8.
Height (Lat. *celsus*, high). ⁴ Beauty (Lat. *pulcher*).

Compersion none of similitude
 May to thi grace be made in no degre,
 That hast us set with love in unite.

“Grete cause have we to prayse thy name
 and the,

For thorough the we live in joye and blisse.
 Blessed be thowe, most souverayn to se !
 Thi holy courte of gladnesse may not mysse :¹
 A thousand sith we may rejoise in this, 621
 That we ben thyne with harte, and all ifere²
 Enflamed with thi grace, and hevynly fere.”

Musyng of tho that spakyn in this wise,
 I me bethought in my remembraunce
 Myne oryson right godely to devise,
 And pleasauntly with hartes obeysaunce
 Beseche the goddesse voiden³ my grevaunce ;
 For I loved eke, sauf that I wist nat where ;
 Yet downe I set and seid as ye shall here. 630

“Feirest of alle that ever were or be !
 Lucerne⁴ and light to pensif creature !
 Myne hole affiaunce, and my lady free,
 My goddesse brighte, my fortune and my ure⁵
 I geve and yeld my harte to the full sure,
 Humbly beseching, lady, of thi grace
 Me to bestowe into som blissed place.

“And here I vowe me feithfull, true, and
 kynde,
 Withoute offence of mutabilite,

¹ That is, to enjoy. ² Together. ³ Remove. ⁴ Lamp (*Lat*
lucerna, a lamp). ⁵ Good luck (O. Fr. *sur*, hap). Cf. “inure.”

Humbly to serve, while I have witte and mynde,
Myne hole affiaunce, and my lady free ! 641

In thilke place, there ye me signe to be :
And, sith this thing of newe is gove me, aye
To love and serve, and nedely most I obey.

“ Be merciable with thi fire of grace,
And fix myne harte there bewtie is and routh,
For hote I love, — determyne in no place,
Sauf only this, be God and by my trouth,
Trowbled I was with slomber, sleep, and slouth
This other night, and in a visioun 650
I se a woman romen up and downe,

“ Of mene stature, and semly to beholde,
Lusty and fressh, demure of countynaunce,
Yong and wel shape, with here ¹ that shone as
gold,

With eyen as cristall, farcid ² with plesaunce ;
And she gan stirre myne harte a lite to daunce ;
But sodenly she vanysshe gan right there :
Thus I may sey, I love and wot not where.

“ For whate she is, ne her dwellyng, I note,
And yit I fele that love distreyneth me : 660
Might Iche her knowe, her wold I fayn, God wot,
Serve and obeye with all benignite.
And if that other be my destine,
So that no wise I shall hir never se,
Than graunte me her that best may liken **me**.

“ With glad rejoyse to live in parfite hele,
Devoide of wrath, repent, or variaunce ;

¹ Hair ² Stuffed (Fr. *farcir*).

And able me to do that may be wele
 Unto my lady, with hartes hie plesaunce :
 And, myghty goddesse, through thy purviaunce
 My witte, my thought, my lust and love so
 guyde, 671

That to thyne honure I may me provyde
 "To set myne harte in place there I may
 like,

And gladly serve with all affeccioun.
 Grete is the payn which at myne hart doth
 styke,

Till I be sped by thyne eleccion :
 Helpe, lady goddesse ! that possession
 I myght of her have, that in all my life
 I clepen shal my quene and hartes wife.

"And in the Courte of Love to dwelle for
 aye 680

My wille it is, and done the sacryfice :
 Dayly with Diane eke for to fight and fraye,
 And holden werre,¹ as myght well me suffice .
 That goddesse chaste I kepen in no wise
 To serve ; a figge for all her chastite !
 • Hir lawe is for religiosite."

And thus gan fynysse preyer, lawde, and
 preice,

Which that I gove to Venus on my kne,
 And in myne harte to ponder and to peice ;²
 I gave ³ anon hir ymage fressh bewtie : 690
 "Heile to that figure swete ! and heile to the,

¹ Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 2236. ² Weigh. ³ Ascribed to.

Cupide," quod I, and rose and gede my way,
And in the temple as I gede, I sey¹

A shryne sormownting all in stones riche,
Of which the force was plesaunce to myne ye,
With diamant or saphire, never liche
I have none seyen, ywrought so wonderly.
So when I met with Philobone in hie,
I gan demaunde, "Who is this sepulture?"
"Forsoth," quod she, "a tender creature 700

"Ys shryned there, and Pite is her name.
She saw an egle wreke hym on a flye,
And pluk his wynges, and ete hym, in his game,
And tender harte of that hath made her dye:
Eke she wold wepe, and morne right piteously
To sene a lover suffre grete destresse.
In alle the courte nas none, that as I gesse,
"That coude a lover halfe so well availle,
Ne of his woo the torment or the rage
Asslaken, for he was sure, withouten faile, 710
That of his gryefe she coude the hete asuage.
In stede of Pite, spedeth hote corage
The maters alle of courte, now she is dede;
I me report in this to womanhede.²

"For weile and wepe, and crye, and speke,
and praye, —
Women wolde not have pite on thi playnt;
Ne by that meane to ease thyne hart conveye,
But the receyven for there owen talent:³
And sey that Pite causith the, in consent

¹ As I went, I saw. ² Woman's conduct. ³ Inclination

Of rewth, to take thy service and thy payne 720
In that thow maist, to please thy soverayne.

“ But this is counsell, kepe it secretly,”
Quod she, “ I nolde for all the world abowte,
The Quene of Love it wist ; and witte ye why ?
For yf by me this mater spryngen oute,
In courte no lenger shuld I, owte of dowte.
Dwellen, but shame in all my life endry
Nowe kepe it close,” quod she, “ this hardely.

“ Well, all is well ! Nowe shall ye sene,” she
seide,

“ The feirest lady under sonne that is : 730
Come on with me, demeane you liche a mayde,
With shamefast drede, for ye shall speke, iwis,
With her that is the mirour joye and blisse ;
But somwhate straunge and sad of her demeane
She is ; beware youre countenaunce be sene,

“ Nor over light, ne rechelesse, ne to bolde,
Ne malapert, ne rynnynge with your tonge ;
For she will you abeisen and beholde,
And you demande why ye were hens so longe
Oute of this courte, withouten resorte amonge
And Rosiall her name is hote aright, 741
Whose harte as yet is goven to no wight.

“ And ye also ben, as I understond,
With love but light avaunced, by your worde ;
Might ye be happe youre fredome maken bond,
And fall in grace with her, and wel accorde,
Well myght ye thank the God of Love and
Lord ;

For she that ye sawe in youre dreme appere,
To love suche one, whate ar ye then the
nere? 749

"Yit wote ye whate? as my remembraunce
Me gevith now, ye fayne where that ye seye
That ye with love hadde never acqueyntaunce,
Sauf in your dreme right late this other daye:
Why, yis, *parde!* my life, that durst I laye,
That ye were caught upon an heth, when I
Saw you complayn, and sighe full piteously

"Withynne an erber, and a garden faier
With floures growe, and herbes vertuose,
Of which the savour swete was and the aire,
There were youre self full hote and amerouse:
Iwis ye ben to nyse and daungerouse; 761
A! wolde ye nowe repent, and love some
newe?"

"Nay, by my trouth," I seid, "I never knewe
"The godely wight, whoes I shall be for aye:
Guyde me the Lord that love hath made and
me."

But furth we went into a chambre gay,
There was Rosiall, womanly to se,
Whose stremes, sotell-percyng of her ye,
Myne harte ganne thrille for bewtie in the
stounde:

"Alas," quod I, "who hath me gove this
wounde?" 770

And than I dredde to speke till at the laste
I grete the lady reverently and wele;

Whan that my sigh was gon and overpast,
 Than downe on knees ful humbly gan I knele,
 Beseching her my fervent woo to kele,¹
 For there I toke full purpose in my mynde,
 Unto her grace my paynfull harte to bynde.

For yf I shall all fully her discryve,
 Her hede was rounde, by compace of nature,
 Her here as gold, — she passed all on live, —
 And lylly forhede hade this creature, 781
 With loveliche browes, flawe,² of coloure pure,
 Bytwene the whiche was mene disseveraunce
 From every browe, to shewe a due distaunce.

Her nose directed streight, and even as
 lyne,
 With fourme and shap therto convenient,
 In which the goddes mylke white path³ doth
 shyne ;
 And eke her yen ben bright and orient
 As is the smaragde,⁴ unto my juggement,
 Or yet thise sterres heavenly, smale and brighte ;
 Hir visage is of lovely rede and white. 791

Her mouth is shorte, and shutte⁵ in litell
 space,
 Flamyng somdele, not over rede, I mene,
 With prengnante lippes, and thiike to kisse,
 percas, —
 For lyppes thynne, not fatte, but ever lene,
 They serve of naught, thay be not worth a
 bene ;

¹ Cool. ² Yellow. ³ The Galaxy. ⁴ Emerald. ⁵ Shut.

For if the basse ben full, there is delite,
Maximyan¹ truly thus doth he write.

But to my purpose : I sey, white as snowe
Ben all her teth, and in order thay stande 800
Of one stature ; and eke her breth, I trowe,
Surmounteth all oders that ever I found
In swetnesse ; and her body, face, and honde
Ben shaply slender, so that from the hede
Unto the fote, all is but womanhede.

I holde my pease of other things hidde, —
Here shal my soule, and not my tong, be-
wraye, —

But how she was arrayed, yf ye me bidde,
That shall I well discovere you and saye :
A bend of gold and silke, ful fressh and gay,
With her² in tresse, ibrowdered full welle, 811
Right smothly kempte, and shynyng every dele.

Aboute her nec a floure of fressh devise
With rubies set, that lusty were to sene ;
And she in gowne was, light and sommer-wise,
Shapen full wele, the coloure was of grene,
With awreat seint³ aboute her sides clene,
With divers stones, precious and riche, —
Thus was she raied, yit saugh I never he-
liche.

For yf that Jove hadde but this lady seyn,
Tho Calixto ne yet Alcmenia, 821.
Thay never hadden in his armes leyne ;

¹ The amatory elegies of Maximianus were published at Naples in 1501, though an edition in folio had been issued at Utrecht in 1473. He mentions the base of the lips ² Hair. ³ Golden girdle.

Ne he hadde loved the faire Europa ;
 Ye, ne yit Dane ne Antiopa !
 For all here bewtie stood in Rosiall,
 She semed lich a thyng celestiall.

In bownte, favor, porte, and semlynesse
 Plesaunt of figure, myrroure of delite,
 Gracious to sene, and rote of gentilnesse,
 With angell visage, lusty rede and white : 830
 There was not lak, sauf daunger¹ had a lite
 This godely fressh² in rule and governaunce ;
 And somdele straunge she was for her ples-
 aunce.

And truly sone I toke my leve and wente.
 Whanne she hadde me enquired whate I was ;
 For more and more impressen gan the dente
 Of Loves darte, while I beheld her face ;
 And efte agayn I com to seken grace,
 And up I put my bille, with sentence clere 839
 That folowith aftir ; rede and ye shall here.

The Bille.

O ye fressh, of bewtie the rote,
 That nature hath fourmed so wele and made
 Pryncesse and Quene ! and ye that may do bote
 Of all my langoure with youre wordes glade !
 Ye woundede me, ye made me wo bestad ;³
 Of grace redresse my mortall grieve, as ye
 Of al myne harme the verrey causer be.

Now am I caught, and unware sodenly,

¹ Imperiousness. ² Fresh one. ³ Imperiled.

With persant stremes of your yen so clere,
 Subjecte to ben, and serven you mekely, 850
 And all youre man, iwys, my lady dere,
 Abidyng grace, of which I you require,
 That merciles ye cause me not to sterve ;
 But guerdon me, liche as I may deserve.

For, by my trouth, the dayes of my breth
 I am and wille be youre in wille and harte,
 Pacient and meke, for you to suffre dethe
 If it require ; nowe rewe upon my smerte ;
 And this I swere, I never shall oute sterte
 From Loves Courte, for none adversite, 860
 So ye wold rewe on my distresse and me.

My destine, my fate, and ure,¹ I blisse,
 That have me set to ben obedient
 Only to you, the floure of all iwys :
 I truste to Venus never to repente ;
 For ever redy, glad and dyligent,
 Ye shalle me fynde in service to your grace,
 Tyll deth my life oute of my body rase.²

Humble unto your excellence so digne,
 Enforcing ay my wittes and delite 870
 To serve and please with glad harte and be-
 nigne,

And ben as Troylus, Troyes knyghte,
 Or Antony for Cleopatre bright,
 And never you, me thanks,³ to reneye :
 This shall I kepe unto myne endyng daye.

Enprint my speche in youre memoriall

Fortune. Cf. Fr. *bonheur*. ² Tear (Fr. *arracher*) Willingly

Sadly,¹ my princesse, salve of all my sore !
 And think that, for I wolde becommen thrall,
 And ben youre owyn, as I have seid before,
 Ye most of pite cherisshe more and more 880
 Youre man, and tender aftir his deserte,
 And gif him corage for to ben expert.

For where that one hath sette his harte on fire
 And fyndeth nether refute ne plesaunce,
 Ne worde of comforte, deth will quite his hire.
 Allas ! that there is none allegeaunce
 Of all there woo ! alas, the grete grevaunce
 To love unloved ! But ye, my Lady dere,
 In other wise may governe this matere !

“ Truly gramercy, frende ; of your gode wille,
 And of youre profer in youre humble wise ! 891
 But for youre service, take and kepe it stille.
 And where ye say, I ought you well cheryse,
 And of youre grefe the remedy devise,
 I knowe not why : I nam acqueynted welle
 With you, ne wote not soothly where ye dwelle.”

“ In arte of love I write, and songes make,
 That may be song in honour of the Kyng
 And Quene of Love ; and than I undertake,
 He that is sadde shall than full mery synge.
 And daungerus² not ben in every thing 901
 Beseche I you, but sene my wille and rede,
 And let your answer put me oute of drede.”

¹ Soberly. ² Distant.

“Whate is your name? rehearse it here, I
pray,

Of whens and where, of whate condicion
That ye ben of? Let se, com of, and say!
Fayne wold I knowe your disposicion:
Ye have putte uppon your olde entencion;
But whate ye meane to serve me I note, 909
Sauf that ye saye ye love me wounder hote.”

“My name? alas, my hart, why makest thou
straunge?

Philogenet I cald am fer and nere,
Of Cambrige clerke, that never think to chaunge
Fro you that with youre heavenly stremes clere
Ravissh myne harte and goste and al in fere:
This is the firste, I write my bille for grace,
Me thynke I se som mercy in youre face.

“And whate I mene, by goddes that all hath
wrought,

My bille now maketh fynall mencion,
That ye bene lady in myne inward thought 920
Of all myne harte withouten offencion,
That I beste love, and have sith I beganne
To drawe to courte. Lo, thanne! what myght
I saye?

I yeld me here unto youre nobleye.

“And if that I offend, or wilfully
Be pompe of harte your precepte disobeye,
Or done agayn youre wille unskyllfully,
Or greven you for earnest or for playe,

Correcte ye me right sharply than, I praye,
 As it is sene unto youre womanhede, 930
 And rewe on me, or ellis I nam but dede."

"Nay, God forbede to feffe¹ you so with
 grace,
 And for a worde of sugred eloquence,
 To have compassion in so litell space!
 Than were it tyme that som of us were hens!
 Ye shal not fynde in me suche insolence.
 Ay! wlate is this? may we not suffer sight?
 How may ye loke upon the candill-light,

"That clerer is and hotter than myn ye?
 And yet ye seid the bemes perse and frete. 940
 Howe shall ye thanne the candel-light endrye?²
 For well wotte ye, that hath the sharper hete.
 And there ye bidde me you correcte and bete,
 Yf ye offende, — nay, that may not be done:
 There come but fewe that speden³ here so soon.

"Withdrawe your ye, withdrawe from presens
 eke:
 Hurte not youreself, through folly, with a loke;
 I wolde be sory so to make you syke!
 A woman shulde be ware eke whom she toke:
 Ye beth a clarke; go serchynne well my boke,
 Yf any women ben so light to wynne: 951
 Nay, abide a while, thogh ye were alle my kynne
 "So sone ye may not wynne myne harte, in
 trowth

¹ Grant. ² Endure. ³ Succeed.

The guyse of courte wille sene youre stedfast-
nesse,

And as ye done, to have upon you routh.
Youre owen deserte, and lowly gentilnesse,
That wille rewarde you joy for hevynesse ;
And thogh ye waxen pale, and grene and dede,
Ye most it use a while, withouten drede,

“And it accept and grucchen in no wise ; 960
But where as ye me hastily desire
To bene to love, me thynke ye be not wise.
Cease of your language ! cease, I you require !
For he that hath this twenty yere bene here
May not obtayne ; than marveile I that ye
Be nowe so bold, of love to trete with me.”

“A ! mercy, hart, my lady and my love,
My rightwise princesse and my lives guyde !
Nowe may I playne to Venus all above,
That rewthles ye me gife this wounde wide ! 970
Whate have I done ? why may it not betide,
That for my trouth I may receyved be ?
Allas ! thanne youre daunger and your cruel-
tie !

“In wofull howre I gote was, welawey !
In wofull oure fostered and ifedde,
In wofull oure iborne, that I ne may
My supplicacion swetely have ispedde !
The frosty grave and cold must be my bedde,
Withoute ye list youre grace and mercy shewe,
Deth with his axe so faste on me doth hewe

“ So grete disease and in so litell while, 981
 So littel joy that felte I never yet ;
 And at my wo Fortune gynnyth to smyle,
 That never arst I felte so harde a fitte :
 Confounded ben my spritis and my witte,
 Tylle that my lady take me to her cure,
 Which I love best of erthely creature.

“ But that I like, that may I not come by ;
 Of that I playn, that have I habondaunce ;
 Sorowe and thought, thay sitte me wounder
 nye ; 99c
 Me is withholde that myght be my plesaunce :
 Yet turne agayn, my worldly suffisaunce,
 O lady bright ! and sauf your feithfull true,
 And ar I dye yit ones upon me rewe.”

With that I fell in swounde and dede as stone,
 With coloure slayn and wanne as asshen pale ;
 And by the hande she caught me up anon ;
 “ Aryse anon,” quod she, “ whate ? have ye
 dronken dwale ? ¹

Why slepen ye ? it is no nyghtirtale.” ²

“ Now mercy, swete ! ” quod I, iwis affraied.

“ Whate thyng,” quod she, “ hath made you so
 dysmayed ? 1001

“ Now wote I well that ye a lover be,
 Youre hewe is witnesse in this thyng,” she
 seide :

“ If ye were secrete, ye mighte knowe,” quod
 she,

¹ A sleeping potion. ² Night time.

"Curteise and kynde, al this shulde be aleyde :
And now, myne harte ! all that I have missaid,
I shall amend and sette youre harte in ease."

"That worde it is," quod I, "that doth me
please." 1008

"But this I charge, that ye the statutes kepe,
And breke them not for slouth nor ignoraunce."

With that she gan to smyle and laughen depe.

"Iwis," quod I, "I wille do youre plesaunce,
The sixteenth statute doth me grete grevaunce.
But ye most that relesse or modifie."

"I graunte," quod she, "and so I wille truly."

And softly thanne her coloure gan appeire,
As rose so rede, throughoute her visage alle,
Wherefore me thynke it is accordyng here,
That she of right be cleped Rosyall.

Thus have I wonne, with wordes grete and
smalle, 1020

Some godely worde of hir that I love beste,
And trust she shall yit sette myne harte in rest.

"Goth on," she seid to Philobone, "and take
This man with you, and lede hym all abowte
Withynne the courte, and shewe hym, for my
sake,

Whate lovers dwelle withynne, and alle the
rowte

Of officers him shewe, for he is, oute of dowte,
A straunger yit." "Come on," quod Philo
bone,

"Philogenet, with me now must ye gon."

And stalkyng softe with easy pase, I sawe,
 Aboute the kyng stonden enviroun, 1031
 Attendaunce, Diligence, and their felawe
 Fortherer, Esperaunce, and many one ;
 Dred-to-offende there stode, and not alone ;
 For there was eek the cruel adversaire,
 The lovers foe, that cleped is Dispaire ;

Which unto me spak angrely and felle,
 And seid, my lady me dysseyve ne shalle :
 "Trowest thoue," quod she, "that all that she
 did telle 1039

Ys true? Nay, nay, but under hony galle.
 Thy birth and hers they be nothing egalle :
 Caste of thyne harte, for alle her wordes white,
 For in gode faith she lovith the but a lite.

"And eke remember thyne habilité
 May not compare with hir ; this well thoue
 wote."

Ye, than came Hope and seid, "My frende, let
 be !

Beleve hym not : Despaire he gynneth dote."
 "Alas !" quod I, "here is both cold and hote
 The tone¹ me biddeth love, the toder naye,
 Thus wote I not whate me is best to saye.

"But well wote I, my lady grauntede me
 Truly to be my woundes remedye ; 1051
 Her gentilnesse may not infected be
 With doblenes, thus trust I till I dye."
 So cast I voide² Despaires companye

¹ The one. ² Endeavored I to quit.

And taken Hope to councel and to frende.

“Ye, kepe that wele,” quod Philobone, “in mynde.”

And there beside, withyn a bay wyndowe,
Stode one in grene, ful large of brede and
length,

His berd as blak as fethers of the crowe ; 1060

His name was Lust, of wounder might and
strength ;

And with Delite to argue there he thynketh,

For this was alle his opynyon,

That love was synne ; and so he hath begonne

To reasone faste, and legge¹ auctorite ;

“Nay,” quod Delite, “love is a vertue clere,

And from the soule his progresse holdeth he :

Blynd appityte of lust doth often stirre,

And that is synne : for reason lakketh there,

For thowe dost thinke thi neighbours wife to

wynne :

1070

Yit thynk it well that love may not be synne ;

“For God, and saint, thay love right verely,

Voide of al synne and vise : this knowe I wele,

Affecion of flessch is synne truly ;

But verray² love is vertue, as I fele,

For verray love may thy freyle desire akkele :³

For verray love is love withouten synne.”

“Nowe stynte,” quod Lust, “thow spekest not
worth a pynne.”

And there I left them in there arguyng,

¹ Allege. True. ³ Cool.

Romyng ferther in the castell wide, 1080
 And in a corner **Lier** stode talkyng
 Of lesinges faste, with Flattery there beside ;
 He seid that women were ¹ attire of pride,
 And men were founde of nature variaunte,
 And coude be false and shewen beawe sem-
 blaunt.²

Then Flattery bespake and seid, iwis,
 " Se, so she goth on patens faire and fete,³
 Hit doth right wele : whate prety man is this
 That rometh her ? Nowe truly drynke ne mete
 Nede I not have, mine herte for joye doth bete
 Hym to beholde, so is he godely fressh : 1091
 It semeth for love his harte is tender nessh."⁴

This is the courte of lusty folke and gladdē,
 And wel becometh there abite and arraye :
 O why be som so sory and so sadde,
 Complaynyng thus in blak and white and graye ?
 Freres thay ben, and monkes, in gode faye :
 Alas, for rewth ! grete dole it is to sene,
 To se them thus bewaile and sory bene.

Se howe thei crye and wryng there handes
 white, 1100
 For thei so sone wente to religion !
 And eke the nonnes with vaile and wymple
 plight,

There thought is, thei ben in confusion :
 " Alas," thay sayn, " we fayne perfeccion,
 In clothes wide, and lake oure libertie ;
 But all the synne mote on oure frendes be.

¹ Wear. ² Fine appearance. ³ Trim. ⁴ Soft.

“For, Venus wote, we wold as fayne as ye,
That ben attired here and wel besene,
Desiren man and love in oure degree, 1109
Ferme and feithfull right as wolde the quene :
Oure frendes wikke, in tender youth and grene,
Agenst oure wille made us religious ;
That is the cause we morne and waylen thus.”

Than seide the monkes and freres in the
tide,
“Well may we curse oure abbeyes and our
place,

Our statutes sharpe to syng in copes wide,
Chastly to kepe us oute of loves grace,
And nevere to fele comforte ne solace ;
Yet suffere we the hete of loves fire,
And aftir that som other happily we desire. 1120

“O Fortune cursed, why nowe and wherefore
Hast thowe,” thay seide, “bereft us libartie,
Sith nature gave us instrument in store,
And appetite to love and lovers be ?
Why mote we suffere suche adversite,
Dyane to serve, and Venus to refuse ?
Full often sithe thise matiers doth us muse.¹

“We serve and honoure, sore agenst oure
wille,
Of chastite the goddes and the quene ;
Us lefer were with Venus biden stille, 1130
And have reward for love, and soget bene
¶ Into thise women courtely, fressh, and shene

These matters cause us to muse.

Fortune, we curse thi whele of variaunce !
There we were wele thou revist our plesaunce."

Thus leve I them, with voice of pleint and
care,

In ragyng woo crying full petiously ;
And as I gede, full naked and full bare
Some I beholde, loking dispiteously
On poverte, that dedely caste there ye ;
And " Welaway !" thei cried, and were not
fayne, 1140

For they ne myght there glad desire attayne.

For lak of richesse worldely, and of goode,
Thay banne and curse, and wepe, and seyn,
" Allas,

That poverte hath us hent that whilom stode
At hartis eas, and fre and in gode case !
But now we dare not shew our-self in place,
Ne us embolde to dwelle in company,
There as oure harte wolde love right faithfully."

And yet agaynewarde shryked every nonne,
The pange of love so strayneth them to crye :
" Nowe woo the tyme," quod thay, " that we be
'boune ! 1151

This hatefull ordre nyse will done us dye !
We sigh and sobbe, and bleden inwardly,
Fretyng oure self with thought and hard com-
playnt,

That ney for love we waxen wode and faynt."

And as I stode beholdyng here and there,
I was ware of a sorte full languysshying,

Savage and wilde of lokyng and of chere,
 'There mantaylles and there clothes aye teryng,
 And ofte thay were of nature complaynyng, 1160
 For they there membres lakked, fote and hande,
 With visage wry, and blynde, I understande.

Thay lakkede shap, and beautie to preferre
 Them self in love : and seid that God and
 Kynde

Hath forged them to worshippen the sterre,
 Venus the bright, and leften all behynde
 His other werkes clene and oute of mynde :
 "For other have there full shape and bewtie,
 And we," quod thay, "ben in deformyte."

And nye to them there was a companye, 1170
 That have the Susters waried ¹ and mysseid,
 I mene the thre of fatall destyne,
 That be our wardes : ² and sone in a brayde, ³
 Oute gan thay crye as thay hadde been afayed :
 "We curse," quod thay, "that ever hath Nature
 Iformed us this wofull life to endure."

And there was Contrite, and gan him re-
 pente,
 Confessyng hole the wounde that Cithere ⁴
 Hath with the darte of hote desire hym sent,
 And howe that he to love muste subyet be :
 'Thanne held he all his skornes vanyte, 1181
 And seide that lovers lede a blisfull life,
 Yonge men and old, and widue, maide and
 wife.

¹ Fates opposed ² Wardens. ³ Start. ⁴ Venus

“Bereve me, Goddesse,” quod he, “of thy
myght,

My skornes all and skoffes, that I have
No power for to mokken any wight,
That in thy service dwelle : for I dide rave :
This knowe I welle right nowe, so God me save,
And I shal be the chefe post of thy feith, 1189
And love upholde, the revers who-so seith.”

Dissemble stode not ferre from hym in trouth,
With party¹ mantill, party hode and hose ;
And seid he had upon his lady rowth,
And thus he wounde hym in, and gan to glose
Of his entente ful doble, I suppose :
In all the world he seid he lovid her wele ;
But ay me thoughte he loved hir nere a dele.

Eke Shamefastnesse was there, as I toke hede,
That blusshed rede, and darst nat ben aknowe
She lover was, for thereof hadde she drede ;
She stode and hyng² her visage downe alowe ;
But suche a sight it was to sene, I trowe, 1202
As for thise roses rody on there stalke :
There cowde no wight her spy to speke or talke

In loves arte, so gan she to abasshe,
Ne durste not utter al her privite :
Many a stripe and many a grievouse lasshe
She gaven to them that wolden lovers be,
And hindered sore the sympill comonaltie, 1209
That in no wise durste grace and mercy crave,
For were not she, thei nede but aske and have

¹ Party-colored. ² Hung.

Where yf thay nowe approchyn for to speke,
 Thanne Shamefastnesse returnyth them agayn :
 Thay thynke, If we oure secrete counsell breke,
 Our ladys wille have scorne on us certen,
 And paraventure thynken grete disdayne :
 Thus Shamefastnesse may bryngyn in dispeire,
 When she is dede the toder will be heire.

Come forth, Avaunter !¹ nowe I ryngye thy
 belle !

I spied hym sone ; to God I make avowe, 122c
 He lokede blak as fendes dôth in helle.

"The first," quod he, "that ever I dide wowe,
 Withynne a worde she com, I wotte not howe,
 So that in armes was my lady fre,
 And so hath ben a thousand mo than she.

"In Englund, Bretayn,² Spain, and Pycardie,
 Artoys, and Fraunce, and up in hie Holande,
 In Burgoyne, Naples, and Italy,
 Naverne, and Grece, and up in hethen londe,
 Was never woman yit that wolde withstonde,
 To ben at myne commaundement whan I
 wolde : 1231

I lakkede neither silver coyne ne golde ;

"And there I met with this estate and that ;
 And here I broched,³ here, and here, I trowe :
 Lo ! there goith one of myne ; and wotte ye
 whate ?

Yonne fressh attired have I leyde ful lowe ;
 And suche one yonder eke right well I knowe

¹ Boaster. ² Brittany. ³ Deflowered.

I kepte the statute whan we lay ifere ;¹
 And yet yon same hath made me right goode
 chere."

Thus hath Avaunter blowen every where
 Al that he knowith, and more a thousand
 folde ; 1241

His ancestrye of kynne was to Liere,
 For firste he makith promyse for to holde
 His ladys councell, and it not unfolde ;
 Wherefore, the secrete when he doth unshutte,²
 Than lieth he, that all the world may witte.

For falsing so his promyse and beheste,
 I wounder sore he hath suche fantasie ;
 He lakketh witte, I trowe, or is a beste,
 That canne no bette hymself with reason guye.³
 Be myne advice, Love shall be contrarie 1251
 To his avayle,⁴ and hym eke dishonoure,
 So that in courte he shall no more sojoure.

"Tak hede," quod she, this litell Philobone,
 "Where Envye rokketh⁵ in the corner yonde,
 And sitteth dirke ; and ye shalle see anon
 His lene bodie, fading face and honde ;
 Hymself he fretteth,⁶ as I understonde,
 Witnes of Ovide Methamorphosose,
 The lovers foo he is, I will not gloose. 1260

"For where a lover thinketh him promote,
 Envye will grucche, repynyng at his wele ;
 It swelleth sore aboute his hartes rote,

¹ Together. ² Open. ³ Guide. ⁴ Advantage. ⁵ Shaketh
 Eateth. Cf. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, ii. 770.

That in no wise he canne-not live in hele ;¹
 And yf the feithfull to his lady stele,²
 Envy will noise and ryng it rounde aboute,
 And seye much worse than done is, oute of
 dowte."

And Prevye Thought, rejoycing of hym-self,
 Stode not ferre thens in abite mervelous ;
 "Yonne is," thought I, "som sprite or som elf,
 His sotill image is so curious : 1271

Howe is," quod I, "that he is shaded thus
 With yonder cloth, I note of whate coloure ?"
 And nere I went and gan to lere and pore,
 And frayned³ him a question full harde.
 'What is," quod I, "the thyng thou lovest
 beste ?

Or whate is bote unto thy paynes harde ?
 Me think thou liveste here in grete unreste,
 Thowe wandrest ay from south to est and
 weste,

And est to north ; as ferre as I canne see, 1280
 There is no place in courte may holden the.

"Whom folowest thoue ? where is thy harte
 iset ?

But my demaunde asoile⁴ I thee require."

"Me thoughte," quod he, "no creature may
 lette

Me to ben here, and where as I desire :
 For where as absence hath done oute the fire,
 My mery thought it kyndelith yet agayn,
 That bodely me thinke with my souverayne

¹ Health. ² Go privately. ³ Asked. ⁴ Answer

“I stand and speke, and laugh, and kisse,
and halse,¹ 1289

So that my thought comforteth me ful ofte :
I think, God wot, though all the world be false,
I wille be trewe ; I think also howe softe
My lady is in speche, and this on lofte
Bryngeth myne harte in joye and grette glad
nesse ;

This prevey thought alayeth myne hevynesse.

“And whate I thinke or where to be, no man
In all this erth can tell, iwis, but I :
And eke there nys no swalowe swifte, ne swan
So wight ² of wyng, ne half so yerne ³ can flye ;
For I canne ben, and that right sodenly, 1300
In heven, in helle, in Paradise, and here,
And with my laday, whan I wylle desire.

“I am of counsell ferre and wide, I wote,
With lord and lady, and there privite
I wotte it all ; and be it cold or hoote,
They shalle not speke withouten licence of me.
I mene, in suche as sesonable bee,
For first the thing is thought withynne the
harte,

Er any worde oute from the mouth astarte.”

And with that worde Thought bad farewell
and geede : 1310

Eke furth went I to sene the cortis ⁴ guyse,
And at the dore came in, so God me spede.
Two courteours of age and of assise

¹ Entreat (embrace the neck). ² Active. ³ Quickly. ⁴ Court's

Liche high, and broad, and, as I me advise,
 The Golden Love and Leden Love thay hight :
 The tone was sad, the toder glad and light.¹

“ Yis ! drawe youre harte, with all your force
 and myght,
 To lustynesse and bene as ye have seid ;
 And thinke that I no drope of favour hight,
 Ne never hade unto youre desire obeide, 1320
 Tille sodenly me thoughte me was affrayed,
 To sene you waxe so dede of countenaunce,
 And Pite bade me done you som pleasaunce.

“ Oute of her shryne she rose from dethe to
 live,
 And in myne ere full prively she spake :
 ‘ Doth not youre servaunte hens away to drive,
 Rosiall,’ quod she ; and than myn harte brak,
 For tenderreiche : and where I founde moche
 lake

In youre persoune, than I me self bethoughte,
 And seide, this is the man myne harte hath
 sought.” 1330

“ Gramercy, Pite ! might I but suffice
 To geve due lawde unto thy shryne of gold,
 God wotte I wolde : for sith that thou dide rise
 From deth to live for me, I am beholde
 To thanken you a thousand tymes told,
 And eke my lady Rosyall the shene,
 Which hath in comforte set myne harte, I wene

¹ There is an evident hiatus here. Rosiall now speaks

“ And here I make myne protestacion,
 And depely swere, as myne power, to bene
 Feithful, devoide of variacion, 1340
 And here forbere in anger or in tene,¹
 And serviceable to my worldes quene,
 With all my reason and intelligence,
 To done her honoure high and reverence.”

I hadde not spoke so sone the word, but
 she,
 My souverayne, dyde thanke me hartily,
 And seid, “ Abide, ye shal dwelle stille with
 me
 Tylle season come of May, for than truly
 The Kyng of Love and all his company 1349
 Shalle hold his feste full ryally and welle ; ”
 And there I bode till that the sesone felle.

The Birds' Matins.

On May day, when the larke began to ryse,
 To matens wente the lusty nightingale
 Withyn a temple shapen hawthorne-wise ;
 He myghte not slepe in al the nyghtertale,
 But “ *Domine labia* ”² gan he crye and gale,
 “ My lippes open, Lord of Love, I crye,
 And let my mouth thi preysing now bewrye.”

The egle sang, “ *Venite*,³ bodies alle,
 And let us joye to love that is oure helth.”
 And to the deske anon thay gan to falle, 1361

¹ Grief. ² Lord, [open thou my] mouth. ³ Ps. xcvi 1.

And who came late he preceed in by stelth :
 Than seide the fawcon, oure owen hartis welth,
 "*Domine Dominus noster*,"¹ I wot,
 Ye be the god that done us brenne thus
 hote."

"*Cæli enarrant*,"² seide the poppyngay,
 "Your myght is told in heaven and firma-
 ment."

And than came inne the goldfynch fresh and
 gay,

And seid this psalm with hartily glad intent,
 "*Domini est terra*;"³ this Laten intent,⁴ 1370
 The god of Love hath erth in governaunce ;
 And then the wren gan skippen and to daunce ;

"*Fube Domne*,"⁵ O Lorde of Love, I praye,
 Commande me wel this lesson for to rede ;
 This legend is of alle that wolden deye
 Marters for love ; God gif there sowles spede !
 And to the Venus singe we, oute of drede,
 By influence of all thy vertue greate,
 Besechyng the to kepe us in oure hete."

The seconde lesson robyn redebreste sang :
 "Haile to the god and goddesse of oure
 lay !" ⁶ 1381

And to the lectorn amorysly he sprong, —
 "Haile eke," quod he, "O fresshe season of
 May,
 Oure moneth glad that syngen on the spray !

¹ Ps. viii. 1. ² Ps. xix. 1. ³ Ps. xxiv. 1. ⁴ This Latin means
 Command, Lord (a blessing). ⁵ Law (*i. e.*, faith).

Haile to the floures, red, and white, and blewe,
Which by there vertue maketh oure lustes
newe ! ”

The thridde lesson the turtill-dove toke up,
And therat lough the mavis ¹ in a scorn :
He seid, “ O God, as mote I dyene or suppe,
This folissh dove wille gife us al an horne !
There ben right here a thousand better borne,
To rede this lesson, which as welle as he, 1392
And eke as hote, can love in all degree.”

The turtylle dove seide, “ Welcom, welcom,
May,

Gladsom and light to lovers that ben trewe !
I thanke the Lord of Love that doth purveye
For me to rede this lesson al of dewe ; ²
For in gode south of corage I pursue
To serve my make till deth us moste departe :
And than “ *Tu autem* ” ³ sang he all aparte. 1400

“ *Te Deum amoris* ” ⁴ sang the thrustell-cok :
Tuball hymself, the firste musican,
With key of armony coude not unloke
So swete tewne as that the thrustill can :
“ The Lord of Love we praysen,” quod he than,
And so done alle the foules grete and lite,
“ Honoure we May, in false lovers dispite.”

“ *Dominus regnavit*,” ⁴ seide the pecok there,
The Lord of Love that myghty prynce, iwis,
He hath receyved here and every where : 1410

¹ Thrush. ² In due order. ³ Thou also (Lord, have mercy upon us). ⁴ Thou Lord of Love. ⁵ Ps. xciii. 1.

Nowe *Jubilate*¹ syng." "Whate meneth this?"
Seid than the lynnette, "Welcom, Lord of
blisse!"

Oute sterte the owl with "*Benedicite*!"

Whate meneth all this mery fare?" quod he.

"*Laudate*,"² sang the larke with voice ful
shrille;

And eke the kite, "*O admirabile*!"³

This quere⁴ wil throwe myne eris pers and
thrille;

But whate? Welcom this May season," quod
he;

"And honoure to the Lord of Love mot be,
That hath this feeste so solempne and so
high." 1420

'*Amen*," seid alle, and seid eke the pye.¹

And furth the cokkowe gan procede anon,
With "*Benedictus*," thankyng God in hast,
That in this May wold visite them echon,
And gladden them all while the feste shall
leste:

And therewithal a-loughter oute he braste,
"I thanke it God that I shuld ende the song,
And all the service which hath ben so long."

Thus sange thay all the service of the feste,
And that was done right early to my dome;⁵
And furth goith all the courte bothe moste and
leste, 1431

¹ Ps. c. 1.
3. ⁴ Choir

² Ps. cxlviii. 1.
⁵ Judgment.

³ Probably for *O altitudo*, Rom. xi

To feche the floures fressh, and braunche and
blome ;

And namly hawthorn brought both page and
grome,

With fresshe garlantis partie blewe and white,
And them rejoysen in there grete delite.

Eke eche at other threwe the floures brighte,
The prymerose, the violet, and the golde ;
So than, as I beheld the riall sighte,
My lady gan me sodenly beholde,
And with a trewe love, plited many-folde, 1440
She smote me through the very harte as blive,
And Venus yet I thanke I am alive.

THE FLOWER AND THE LEAF.¹

WHEN that Phebus his chaire of gold so hie
Hadde whirled up the sterrie sky alofte,
And in the Boole² was entred certainly ;
When shoures sweet of raine discended softe,
Causing the ground, fele³ times and ofte,
Up for to give many an wholesome aire,
And every plaine was eke yclothed faire

With newe green, and maketh smalle floures
To springen here and there in field and mede ;
So very good and wholesome be the shoures.
That it renueth that was old and dede 11

¹ Mr Skeat assigns this poem to the middle of the fifteenth century. It was first published in 1598, by Speght, and no manuscript is known. ² Taurus, which the Sun enters in May. ³ Many

In winter time ; and out of every sede
Springeth the hearbe, so that every wight
Of this season wexeth ful glad and light.

And I, so glad of the season thus swete,
Was happed thus upon a certaine nighte :
As I lay in my bed, sleepe ful unmete
Was unto me, but why that I ne mighte
Rest, I ne wiste ; for there nas earthly wight,
As I suppose, hadde more heartes ease 20
Than I, for I nadde sicknesse nor disease.

Wherefore I mervaile greatly of my selfe,
That I so longe withouten sleepe lay ;
And up I rose three houres after twelfe,
Aboute the springing of the day ;
And on I putte my geare and mine array,
And to a pleasaunt grove I gan to passe,
Long or the brighte Sonne up-risen was ;

In which were okes greate, streight as a line,
Under the which the grasse, so fresh of hewe,
Was newly sprong ; and an eight foot or nine
Every tree well fro his fellow grew, 32
With branches brode, lade with leves newe,
That sprongen out agen the sunne shene,
Some very red, and some a glad light grene ;

Which, as me thoughte, was right a plesant
sight ;
And eke the briddes songes for to here
Would have rejoyced any earthly wight ;
And I that couth not yet, in no manere,
Heare the nightingale of all the yeare, 40

Ful busily herkened with hart and eare,
If I her voice perceive coud any where.

And, at the last, a path of little breede
I found, that greatly hadde not used be ;
For it forgrowen was with grasse and weede,
That well unneth a wight ne might it se :
Thoght I, "This path some whider goth, *par*
de !"

And so I followede, till it me broughte
To right a pleasaunt herber,¹ well ywrought,

That benched was, and eke with turfes newe
Freshly turved, whereof the grene gras, 51
So small, so thicke, so short, so fresh of hewe,
That most ylike greene wool, I wot, it was :
The hegge also that gede in this compas,
And closed in all the greene herbere,
With sicamour was set and eglatere,²

Wrethen in fere ³ so well and cunningly,
That every branch and leafe grew by mesure,
Plaine as a bord, of oon height by and by.
I ne segh never thing, I you ensure, 6c
So well y-done ; for he that tooke the cure
It for to make, I trow did all his peine
To make it passe alle tho that men have seine

And shapen was this herber, roofe and all,
As is a prety parlour ; and also
The hegge as thicke as is a castle wall,
That who that list withoute to stond or go,
Though he would all day prien to and fro,

¹ Lodging. ² Eglantine. ³ Together.

He shoulde not see if there were any wighte
Within or no ; but one within wel mighte 70

Perceive alle tho that geden there withoute
Into the field, that was on every side
Covered with corne and grasse ; that out of
doubt,

Though one woulde seeke all the worlde wide,
So rich a felde ne coude not be espide
On any coast, as of the quantitie ;
For of alle good thing there was plentie.

And I, that all this pleasaunt sight ay sie,
T'ought sodainly I felte so sweet an aire
Com of the eglentere, that certainly 80
There is no heart, I deme, in such dispaire,
Ne with no thoughtes froward and contraire
So overlaid, but it shoulde soone have bote,
If it had ones felt this savour sote.

And as I stood and cast aside mine eie,
I was of ware the fairest medler tree,
That ever yet in all my life I sie,
As full of blossomes as it mighte be ;
Therein a goldfinch leaping pretile 89
Fro bough to bough ; and, as him list, gan eete
Of buddes here and there, and floures sweete.

And to the herber side ther was joyninge
This faire tree, of which I have you told ;
And at the last the brid began to singe,
When he had eaten what he eate wolde,
So passing sweetly, that by manifolde
It was more pleasaunt than I coude devise.
And when his song was ended in this wise.

The nightingale with so mery a note
 Answered him, that all the woode rong 100
 So sodainly, that, as it were a sote,¹
 I stood astonied ; so was I with the song
 Thorow ravished, that till late and longe
 Ne wist I in what place I was, ne where ;
 And ay, me thoughte, she song even by mine
 ere.

Wherefore about I waited ² busily,
 On every side, if that I her mighte see ;
 And, at the last, I gan full well aspie
 Where she sat in a fresh grene laurer tree,
 On the further side, even right by me, 110
 That gave so passing a delicious smell,
 According to the eglentere full well.

Whereof I hadde so inly great pleasure,
 That, as me thought, I surely ravished was
 Into Paradice, where as my desire
 Was for to be, and no ferther to passe
 As for that day ; and on the sote grasse
 I sat me downe ; for, as for mine entent,
 The birddes song was more convenient,³ 119

And more pleasaunt to me by many fold.
 Than meat or drinke, or any other thing.
 Thereto the herber was so fresh and cold,
 The wholesome savours eke so comforting,
 That, as I demede, sith the beginning
 Of thilke world was never seene or than ⁴
 So pleasaunt a ground of none earthly man.

¹ Fool. ² Watched. ³ Agreeable. ⁴ Ere then.

And as I sat, the birddes harkening that,
 Me thoughte that I hearde voices sodainly,
 The most sweetest and most delicious
 That ever any wight, I trow truly, 130
 Heard in their life ; for soth the armony
 And sweet accord was in so good musike,
 That the voice to angels most was like.

And at the last, out of a grove faste by,
 That was right goodly and pleasant to sight,
 I sie where there came, singing lustily,
 A world of ladies ; but, to tell aright
 Their grete beautie, it lieth not in my might,
 Ne their array ; neverthelesse I shalle 139
 Telle you a part, though I speake not of alle.

The surcotes white, of velvet wele sitting,
 They were in clad, and the semes echone,
 As it were a maner garnishing,
 Was set with emeraudes, one and one.
 But by and by ful many a riche stone
 Was set on the purfiles, out of doute,
 Of colors, sleeves, and traines round aboute.

As greate pearles, round and oriente,
 Diamondes fine, and rubies rede 149
 And many another stone, of which I wente ¹
 The names now ; and everich on her heade
 A riche fret of gold, which, withoute drede,
 Was full of stately riche stones set ;
 And every lady had a chapelet

Upon her head of floures fresh and greene,

¹ Want.

So wele ywrought and so mervellously,
 That soth it was a noble sight to seene ;
 Some of laurer, and some full pleasantly
 Hadde chapelets of woodbind, and sadly
 Some of *agnus castus*¹ were also 160
 Chapelets freshe ; but there were many tho

That song and daunced, eke ful soberly,
 And all they gedē in manner of compace ;
 But one there gedē in mid the company,
 Soole by her selfe ; but alle followede the pace
 Which that she kepte, whose heavenly faire face
 So pleasaunt was, and her wele shape person,
 That of beautie she past hem everichone.

And more richly beseene, by manifold,
 She was also in every maner thing : 170
 Upon her head, full pleasaunt to beholde,
 A crowne of gold riche for any king :
 A braunch of *agnus castus* eke bearing
 In her hand ; and to my sight truly,
 She lady was of al the company.

And she began a roundell lustely,
 That "*Suse le foyle, devers moy,*" men calle,
 "*Seen et mon joly cuer est endormy ;*"²
 And than the company answered alle,
 With voices sweet entuned and so smalle 180
 That it me thoughte the sweetest melody
 That ever I heard in my life soothly.

And thus they came, dauncing and singing

¹ The chaste tree. ² This poor French is meant to mean, " Under the leaf towards me his and my gentle heart have gone to sleep "

Into the middest of the mede echone,
Before the herber where I was sitting ;
And, God wot, me thought I was wel bigone ;¹
For then I might advise hem one by one,
Who fairest was, who coude best dance or singe,
Or who most womanly was in alle thinge. 189

They hadde not daunced but a little throve,²
When that I hearde not ferre off, sodainely,
So great a noise of thundering trumpes blowe,
As though it should have departed ³ the skie ;
And, after that, within a while I sie,
From the same grove where the ladies come
oute,

Of men of armes coming such a route,
As alle the men on earth hadde ben assembled
In that place, wele horsed for the nones,
Stering so faste, that al the earth trembled :
But for to speake of riches and of stones, 200
And men and horse, I trow the large wones ⁴
Of Prestir John, ne all his tresorie,
Mighte not unneth have boght the tenth partie

Of their array : who so list heare more,
I shall rehearse so as I can a lite.
Out of the grove, that I of spake before,
I sie come first, all in their clokes white,
A company that ware, for their delite,
Chapelets fresh of okes serialle, 209
Newly yspronge, and trumpets ⁵ they were alle.
On every trunpe hanging a broad banere

1n good way. ² Time. ³ Split. ⁴ Dwellings. ⁵ Trumpeters

Of fine tartarium ¹ ful richely bete ;
 Every trumpet his lordes armes bere ;
 About their neckes, with greate pearles sete,
 Colleres brode ; for cost they woulde not lete,
 As it woulde seeme, for their scochones
 echone

Were set aboute with many a precious stone.

 Their horse harneis was all white also.

And after them next, in one company,
 Came kinges of armes, and no mo, 220
 In clokes of white cloth of gold richly ;
 Chapelets of greene on their heades on hie ;
 The crownes that they on their scochones bere
 Were set with pearle, ruby, and saphere,

 And eke great diamondes many one :
 But all their horse harneis and other geare
 Was in a sute accordinge, everychone,
 As ye have heard the foresaid trumpets were ;
 And, by seeming, they were nothing to lere,
 And their guiding they dide so manerly. 230
 And, after hem, came a great company

 Of heraudes and pursevauntes eke,
 Arrayed in clothes of whit velvette,
 And, hardily, they were no thing to seke,
 How they on hem shoulde the harneis sette ;
 And every man had on a chapelet ;
 Scochones and eke horse harneis, indede,
 They had in sute of hem that before hem gede
 Next after hem camen, in armour bright

¹ A sort of cloth. ² Scutcheons.

All save their heades, seemely knightes nine ;
And every claspe and naile, as to my sight,
Of their harneis were of red golde fine ; 242
With cloth of gold, and furred with ermine
Were the trappores of their stedes stronge,
Wide and large, that to the ground dide honge.

And every bosse of bridle and paitrell,
That hadde they, was worth, as I woulde wene,
A thousand pound ; and on their heades, well
Dressed, were crownes of laurer grene,
The best ymade that ever I hadde sene ; 250
And every knight had after him riding
Three henshemen on him ay awaiting.

Of which every first, on a short tronchoun,
His lordes helme bare, so richly dight,
That the worst was worth the ransoun
Of any king ; the second a shield bright
Bare at his backe ; the thridde bare upright
A mightie spere, full sharpe yground and kene,
And every child eke ware of leaves grene

A fresh chapelet upon his haire brighte ;
And clokes white of fine velvet they were ; 261
Their steedes trapped and arraied righte,
Withoute difference, as their lordes were ;
And after hem, on many a fresh corsere,
There came of armede knightes such a route.
That they bespradde the large field aboute.

And all they ware, after their degrees,
Chapelets newe made of laurer grene ;
Some of the oke, and some of other trees,

Some in their hondes bare boughes shene, 270
 Some of laurer, and some of okes kene,
 Some of hauthorne, and some of the woodbind,
 And many mo which I hadde not in mind.

And so they came, their horses freshly ster-
 ing

With bloodie sownes of her trompes loude ;
 There sie I many an uncouth disguising
 In the array of these knightes proude ;
 And at the last, as evenly as they coude,
 They took their places in middes of the mede,
 And every knight turned his horse hede 280

To his fellow, and lightly laid a spere
 In the arest ; and so justes began
 On every part abouten, here and there ;
 Some brake his spere, some drew down hors
 and manne ;

Aboute the field astray the steedes ranne ;
 And, to behold their rule and governaunce,
 I you ensure, it was a great pleasaunce.

And so the justes last an houre and more ;
 But tho that crowned were in laurer grene
 Wanne the prise ; their dintes were so sore,
 That there was none agenst hem mighte sus-
 tene : 291

And the justing all was yleft off clene,
 And fro their horse the ninth alight anone,
 And so did all the remnant everichone.

And forth they gede togider, twain and twain
 That to behold it was a worthy sight,

Toward the ladies on the greene plaine,
That song and daunced, as I saide now righte :
The ladies tho, soone as they goodly mighte,
They braken of bothe the song and dance, 300
And gede to meet hem with ful glad semblance.

And every lady tooke, full womanly,
By the right hond a knight, and forth they gede
Unto a faire laurer that stood fast by,
With leues lade, the boughes of great brede ;
And to my dome there never was, indede,
Man that hadde seene halfe so faire a tree ;
For underneath there might it well have be

An hundred persons, at their owne plesance,
Shadowed fro the heat of Phebus bright, 310
So that they shoulde have felt no grevaunce
Of raine ne haile that hem ne hurte mighte.
The savour eke rejoice would any wighte
That hadde be sicke or melancolius,
It was so very good and vertuous.

And with great reverence encline they lowe
To thilke tree so soot, and faire of hewe ;
And after that, within a little throwe,
They beganne to singe and daunce of newe,
Some song of love, some plaining of untrewes,
Envirouninge the tree that stood upright ; 321
And ever gede a lady and a knight.

And at the last mine eye I caste aside,
And was ware of a lustie company
That came roming out of the field wide,
Fond in hond a knight and a lady ;

The ladies all in surcotes, that richely
 Purfiled were with many a rich stone,
 And every knight of grene ware mantles on,
 Embrouded well so as the surcotes were :
 And everich had a chapelet on her hede, 331
 Which dide right well upon the shining here,
 I-made of goodly floures white and rede ;
 The knightes eke, that they in hond gan lede,
 In sute of hem ware chapelets everychone,
 And before hem wente minstrels many one.

As harpes, pipes, lutes, and sautry,
 All in greene ; and on their heades bare,
 Of divers floures, made full craftely,
 All in a sute, goodly chapelets they ware ; 340
 And, so dauncing, into the mede they fare.
 In mid the which they found a tuft that was
 Al oversprad with floures in compas.

Whereto they enclined everychone
 With great reverence, and that full humbly ;
 And, at the laste, there began anone
 A lady for to singe right womanly
 A bargaret ¹ in praising the daisie ;
 For, as me thought, among her notes swete,
 She said, "*Si douse est la Margarete.*" 350

Than they all answered her in fere,²
 So passingly well, and so pleasauntly,
 That soth it was a blisfull noise to here.
 But, I not how, it happede suddainly
 As aboute noone, the sonne so fervently

¹ Pastoral (Fr. *berger*, shepherd). ² Together.

Waxe hote, that the pretie tendre floures
 Hadde lost the beautie of her freshe colours,
 Forshronke with heat; the ladies eke to-
 brent,

That they ne wiste where hem to bestowe;
 The knightes swelte, for lack of shade nie¹
 shent; 360

And after that, within a little throwe,
 The wind began so sturdily to blowe,
 That down goeth alle the floures everichone,
 So that in all the mede there laft not one;
 Save such as succoured were among the leves
 Fro every storme that mighte hem assaile,
 Growing under hedges and thicke greves;²
 And after that there came a storme of haile
 And raine in fere, so that, withouten faile,
 The ladies ne the knightes nade³ o threed 370
 Drie upon them, so dropping was her weed.⁴

And whan the storm was cleane passed away,
 Tho clad in white that stoode under the tree,
 They felte nothing of the great affray,
 That they in greene without had in ybe;
 To them they gede for routhe and pite,
 Them to comfort after their greate disease,
 So faine they were the helplesse for to ease.

Than was I ware how one of hem in grene
 Had on a crowne, ful rich and wel sitting; 380
 Wherefore I demed wel she was a quene,
 And tho in greene on her were awaiting;

¹ Nigh. ² Groves. ³ Had not. ⁴ Their dress.

The ladies then in white that were comming
Towardes them, and the knightes in fere,
Beganne hem to comfort, and make hem chere.

The queen in white, that was of great beauty,
Tooke by the hond the queen that was in grene,
And said, "Suster, I have right great pitie
Of your annoy, and of the troublous tene,¹
Wherein ye and your company have bene 390
So long, alas ! and if that it you please
To go with me, I shall do you the ease,

"In all the pleasure that I can or may ;"
Whereof the tother, humbly as she mighte,
Thanked her ; for in right ill array
She was with storm and heat, I you behighte ;
And every lady, then anone right,
That were in white, one of them took in grene
By the hond ; which when the knightes hadde
sene, 399

In like wise ech of them tooke hir a knight
I-clad in greene, and forth with hem they fare,
Un-to an hegge, where they anon gan right
To make their justes, woulde they not spare
Boughes to hewe down, and eke trees square,
Wherwith they made hem stately fires greate,
'To dry their clothes that were wringing weate.

And after that, of hearbes that there grewe,
They made, for blisters of the sunne brenning
Very good and wholesome ointmentes newe,
Where that they ged²e the sicke fast anointing

¹ Sorrow. ² Promise. ³ Went.

And after that they gede aboute gadering 411
 Pleasaunt salades, which they made hem eate,
 For to refresh their greate unkindly heate.

The Lady of the Leafe then gan to praye
 Her of the Floure (for so to my seeming
 They shoulde be, as by their arraye)
 To soupe with her, and eek, for any thing,
 That she shoulde with her all her people bringe ;
 And she agen, in right goodly manere,
 Thanketh her of her most friendly cheare, 420

Saying plainely, that she would obaye
 With all her hart all her commaundement ;
 And then anon, withoute lenger delaye,
 The Lady of the Leafe hath one ysent
 For a palfray, as after her intent,
 Arrayed well and faire in harneis of golde,
 For nothing lacked, that to him long sholde.

And after that, to all her company
 She made to purvey horse and every thing
 That they needed ; and then ful lustily, 430
 Even by the herber where I was sitting,
 They passed alle, so pleasantly singing,
 That it would have comforted any wight.
 But then I sie a passing wonder sight ;

For then the nightingale, that all the day
 Had in the laurer sete, and did her might
 The whole service to singe longing to May,
 All sodainly began to take her flight ;
 And to the Lady of the Leafe, forthright,
 She flew, and set her on her hond softly, 440
 Which was a thing I marveled of greatly.

The goldfinch eke, that fro the medler tree
 Was fled for heat into the bushes colde,
 Unto the Lady of the Flower gan flee,
 And on her hond he set him as he wolde,
 And pleasauntly his winges gan to folde ;
 And for to singe they pained hem both, as sore
 As they hadde do of all the day before.

And so these ladies rode forth a great pace,
 And all the rout of knightes eke in fere ; 450
 And I, that hadde seene all this wonder case,
 Thought I would assay in some manere,
 To knowe fully the trouth of this matere,
 And what they were that rode so pleasantly.
 And when they were the herber passed by,

I dreste me forth, and happede to mete
 anone

Right a faire lady, I you ensure ;
 And she come riding by herselfe alone,
 All in white ; with semblance ful demure
 I salued her, and bad good aventure 460
 Might her befall, as I coude most humbly ;
 And she answerede, “ My doughter,¹ gra-
 mercy ! ”

“ Madame,” quod I, “ if that I durst enquire
 Of you, I woulde faine, of that company,
 Wite what they be that paste by this arbere.”
 And she agen answerede right friendly,
 “ My faire doughter, all tho that passed here by

¹ From this address it is supposed that the poem is the production of a woman.

In white clothing be servaunts everichone
Unto the Leafe, and I myselfe am one. 469

"See ye not her that crowned is," quod she,
"All in white?" "Madame," quod I, "yis."

"That is Diane, goddesse of chastite ;
And for because that she a maiden is,
In her own hond the braunch she beareth iwis,
That *agnus castus* men calle properly ;
And alle the ladies in her company,

"Which as ye se of that hearb chapelets
weare,

Be such as han kept alway hir maidenheed :
And alle they that of laurer chaplets beare
Be such as hardy were, and manly indeed, —
Victorious name which never may be dede ! 481
And alle they were so worthy of their honde,
That in her time none might hem withstonde.

"And tho that weare chaplets on their hede
Of fresh woodbind be such as never were
To love untrue in word, in thought, ne dede,
But aye stedfast ; ne for pleasaunce, ne fere,
Thogh that they shuld their hertes al to tere,
Woulde ne flitte, but ever were stedfaste,
Til that their lives there asunder braste." 490

"Now, faire madame," quod I, "yet would I
pray

Your ladiship, if that it mighte be,
That I mighte knowe, by some maner way, —
Sith that it hath liked your Beaute
The trouth of these ladies for to telle me, —

What that these knightes be in rich armour,
And what tho be in grene and weare the flour?

“And why that some dide reverence to the
tre,

And some unto the plot of floures faire?”

“With right good will, my fair doghter,” quod
she, 500

“Sith your desire is good and debonaire;

Tho nine crowned be very exemplaire

Of all honour longing to chivalry;

And those certaine be called the Nine Worthly,¹

“Which ye may see now riding all before,

That in her time dide many a noble dede,

And for their worthinesse full oft have bore

The crowne of laurer leaves on their hede,

As ye may in your olde bookes rede;

And how that he that was a conquerour 510

Hadde by laurer alway his most honour.

“And tho that beare bowes² in their honde,

Of the precious laurer so notable,

Be such as were, I woll ye understonde,

Noble knightes of the Rounde Table,

And eke the Douseperis³ honourable,

Which they bearen in signe of victory;

It is witnesse of their deedes mightily.

“Eke there be Knightes old of the Garter,⁴

That in her time dide right worthily; 520

And the honour they dide to the laurer

¹ Three Jews, three pagans, and three Christians. ² Bowes.
The twelve Paladins (Fr. *douze pairs*) of Charlemagne. ³ *Douseperis*.
The order of Knights of the Garter was instituted by Edward III.

Is for by it they have their laud wholly,
 Their triumph eke, and marshall glory ;
 Which unto them is more parfit richesse,
 Than any wight imagine can or gesse.

" For one leafe given of that noble tree
 To any wight that hath done worthily,
 And it be done so as it oughte to be,
 Is more honour than anything earthly ;
 Witnesse of Rome¹ that founder was truly 530
 Of all knighthood and deedes marvelous ;
 Record I take of Titus Livius.

" And as for her that crowned is in greene,
 It is Flora, of these floures goddessse ;
 And all that here on her awaiting beene,
 It are such folk that loved idlenesse,
 And not delite hadde of no businesse,
 But for to hunt and hauke, and pley in medes,
 And many other such idle dedes.

" And for the greate delite and pleasaunce
 They have to the floure, and so reverently 541
 They unto it do such grete obeisaunce
 As ye may se." " Now, faire madame," quod I,
 " If I durst aske what is the cause and why,
 That knightes have the signe of honour,
 Wel rather by the leafe than by the flour ? "

" Soothly, doughter," quod she, " this is the
 trouth :

¹ The reference seems to be to Julius Cæsar, to whom the senate decreed the right to wear a laurel crown. Suetonius records that Cæsar prized the honor, as it afforded him a means of concealing his madness.

For knightes ever shoulde be persevering,
 To seeke honour without feintise or slouth,
 Fro wele to better in all manner thing ; 550
 In signe of which, with leaves aye lasting
 They be rewarded after their degre,
 Whose lusty green may not appaired¹ be,

“ But aie keping their beautie fresh and
 greene ;

For there nis storme that ne may hem de-
 face,

Ne haile nor snow, ne winde nor frostes kene ;
 Wherfore they have this propertie and grace.
 And for the floure within a little space
 Woll be i-lost, so simple of nature

They be, that they no greevance may endure ;

“ And every storme will blowe them soone
 awaye, 561

Ne laste they not but for oon season ;

That is the cause, the very trouth to saye,
 That they maye not, by no way of reason,
 Be put to no such occupation.”

“ Madame,” quod I, “ with all mine whole
 servise

I thanke you now, in my most humble wise ;

“ For now I am acertained throughly,
 Of every thing I desired to knowe.”

‘ I am right glad that I have said, sothly, 570
 Ought to your pleasure, if ye wille me trowe,”

Quod she agen, “ but to whom do ye owe

¹ Impaired.

Your service? and which wolle ye honoure,
Tel me I pray, this yere, the Leafe or the
Floure?"

"Madame," quod I, "though I be least
worthy,
Unto the Leafe I owe mine observaunce."
"That is," quod she, "right well done cer-
tainly ;

And pray I God to honour you avaunce,
And kepe you fro the wicked remembraunce
Of Malebouche¹ and al his crueltie, — 580
And alle that good and well conditioned be.

"For here may I no lenger now abide,
I muste followe the greate company
That ye maye see yonder before you ride."
And tho forth as I couthe, most humbly
I tooke my leve of her, as she gan hie
After them as fast as ever she mighte ;
And I drow homeward, for it was nigh night.

And put all that I had seen in writing
Under support of them that lust it to rede. 590
O little booke, thou art so unconning,
How darst thou put thy self in prees,² for
drede?

It is wonder that thou wexest not rede,
Sith that thou wost ful lite who shall beholde
Thy rude langage ful boistously unfolde.

¹ Evil-mouth ² The crowd.

THE CUCKOW AND THE NIGHTINGALE,
OR THE BOKE OF CUPIDE.
GOD OF LOVE.

THE god of Love, ah ! benedicite,¹
How myghty and how grete a lorde is he !
For he can make of lowe hertys hie,
And highe low, and like for to die,
And harde hertis he can make free.

And he can make, within a lytel stounde,
Of seke folke ful fresh, hool and sounde,
And of hoole folke he can make seke ;
He can bynde, and unbynden eke,
What he wole have bounden or unbounde. 10

To telle his myght my wit may not suffice,
For he can make of wise folke ful nyse,²
For he may do al that he can devyse,
And in lithere ³ folke dystroye vise,
And proude hertys he can make agryse.⁴

Shortely, al that evere he wol he may,
Agenst him ther dar no wight seye nay ;
For he can glade and greve whom him lyke,⁵
And whom that he wol, don hym laughe or
sike,

And most his myght he sheweth ever in May.

For every trewe gentil herte and fre, 21

¹ The first two lines, says Mr. Skeat, are all that connect this poem with Chaucer. They are from the *Canterbury Tales* (ll. 1785, 1786). The style is nearer that of Chaucer than is that of any of the other attributed poems, and some lines seem to connect it with the *Parlement of Foules*. ² Ignorant. ³ Evil. ⁴ Terrified. ⁵ Pleaseth.

That with him is, or thinketh for to be,
 Agens May now shal have somme sterynge,
 Other to joy, or elles to some mornyng,¹
 In no sesoun so grette, as thynketh me.

For then they mowe here the briddes singe,
 And see the floures and the leves springe,
 That bringeth into hertes remembraunce
 A maner ease, ymedled with grevaunce,
 And lusty thoghthes ful of grete longynge. 30

And of that longynge cometh hevynesse,
 And thereof groweth oft grete sekenesse,
 And al for lak of that that they desyre :
 And thus in May ben hertys set on fire,
 And so they brenne forthe in grete distresse.

I speke al this of felyng truly ;
 For althogh I be olde and unlusty,
 Yet have I felte of that sekenes in May
 Bothe hote and colde, and acces² every day,
 How sore, ywis, ther wot no wight but I. 40

I am so shaken with the feveres white,
 Of al this May yet slept I but a lyte ;
 And also hit ne liketh noght to me
 That eny herte shulde slepy be,
 In whom that Love his firy dart wol smyte.

But as I lay this other nyght wakyng,
 I thoght how lovers had a tokenynge,
 And among hem hit was a comune tale,
 That hit wer good to here the nyghtyngale,
 Rather then the leude cuckow synge. 50

¹ Mourning. ² Returnng attack.

And then I thoght anoon, as hit was daye,
 I wolde goo somme whedir for to assaye
 Yf that I myght a nyghtyngale here ;
 For yet I non had herd of al this yere,
 And hit was tho the thirde nyght of May.

And right anoon as I the day espiede,
 No lenger wolde I in my bed abyde ;
 But unto a wode that was fast by,
 I wente forthe allone ful prively,
 And helde my way down by a broke syde, 60

Til I come into a launde of white and grene,
 So feire oon had I nevere in bene,
 The grounde was grene, ypoudred with dayse,
 The floures and the gras ilike al hie,
 Al grene and white, was nothing elles sene.

Ther sat I doune amonge the feire floures,
 And saw thee briddes crepe out of her boures,
 Ther as they had rested hem al the nyght ;
 They were so joyful of the dayes lyght,
 That they beganne of Mayes the honoures. 70

They coude that servise alle bye rote ;
 Ther was also mony a lovely note !
 Somme songe loude as they hadde playned,
 And somme in other maner voys yfeyned,
 And somme al oute with a lowde throte.

They pruned ¹ hem, and made hem ryght gay,
 And daunseden and lepten on the spray ;
 And evermore two and two in fere,²
 Ryght so as they hadde chosen hem to-yere³
 In Feverere upon Seynt Valentynes day. 80

¹ Made themselves trim. ² Together. ³ This year.

And the ryvere that I sat upon,
 Hit made suche a noyse as hit ron,
 Acordaunt to the foules ermonye,¹
 Me thoght hit was the beste melodye
 That myghte ben yherd of eny man.

And for delyte, I ne wote never how,
 I fel in such a slombre and a swowe,² —
 Nat al on slepe, ne fully al wakyng, —
 And in that swowe me thoght I herde singe
 That sory bridde, the lewede cukkowe, 90

And that was on a tre right faste bye.
 But who was then evel apayed but I?
 “Now God,” quod I, “that died upon the
 croise,

Give sorowe on the, and on thy foule voys !
 For lytel joy have I now of thy crie.”

And as I with the cukkow gan to chide,
 I herde, in the nexte bussches beside,
 A nyghtyngale so lustely singe,
 That with her clere voys she made rynge
 Thro out alle the grene wode wide. 100

“A ! goode nyghtyngale,” quod I thenne,
 “A lytelle hast thou be to longe henne,³
 For here hath ben the lewede cukkow,
 And songen songes rather⁴ then hast thou :
 I prey to God that evel fire her brenne !”

But now I wil yow tel a wonder thyng :
 As longe as I lay in that swownynge,
 Me hoght I wist al that the briddes mente,

¹ Harmony. ² Swoon. ³ Hence. ⁴ Sooner.

And what they seyde, and what was her entente,
And of her speche I hadde good knouynge. 110

And then herd I the nyghtyngale seye,
"Now, goode cuckow, go sommewhere thy weye
And let us that can synge dwellen here ;
Fer every wight escheweth the to here,
Thy songes be so elynge,¹ in gode feye."

"What," quoth she, "what may the ale now ?
Hit thinketh me, I syng as wel as thow,
For my songe is bothe trewe and pleyne,
Al-thogh I cannot creke² hit so in veyne,
As thou dost in thy throte, I wote ner how. 120

"And every wight may understonde me,
But, nyghtyngale, so may they not don the,
For thou hast mony a feyned queint cry ;
I have herd the seye, 'ocy, ocy ;'
But who myghte wete what that shulde be ?"

"O fole," quoth she, "wost thou not what
that is ?

When that I sey, 'ocy, ocy,' iwisse,
Then mene I that I wolde wonder fayne,
That al tho were shamefully islayne,
That menen oght agenes love amys. 130

"And also I wolde alle tho were dede,
That thenke not her lyve in love to lede ;
For who that wol the god of Love not serve,
I dar wel sey he is worthy for to sterve ;
And for that skille,³ 'ocy, ocy,' I grede."⁴

"Ey !" quoth the cuckow, "ywis this is a
queynt lawe,

¹ Sad. ² Make it tremulous. ³ Reason. ⁴ Cry.

That eyther shal I love or elles be slawe
But I forsake alle suche companye ;
For myn entent is neyther for to dye,
Ne while I lyve in loves yoke to drawe, 140

“ For lovers be the folke that ben on lyve,
That moste disese han, and most unthrive,
And most enduren sorowe, wo, and care,
And at the lest failen of her welfaire :
What nedith hit agenes treweth to strive ? ”

“ What ? ” quoth she tho, “ thou art out of thy
mynde !

How maist thou in thy cherles herte fynde
To speke of Loves servauntes in this wyse ?
For in this worlde is noon so good servise
To every wyght that gentil ys of kynde ; 150

“ For therof truly cometh al goodnesse,
Al honour and al gentilnesse,
Worshippe, and ese, and alle hertys lust,
Perfyt joy, and ful ensured trust,
Jolite, plesaunce, and eke freshenesse,

“ Lowelyhed, and trewe companye,
Semelyhed, largenesse, and curtesie,
Drede of shame and for to don amys :
For he that truly Loves servaunt ys
Were lother be shamed then to dye. 160

“ And that this ys sothe that I sey,
In that beleve I wil bothe lyve and deye,
And, kukkow, so rede I the that thou do iwis.”

“ Ye, then,” quoth she, “ God let me never
have blis,

If evere I unto that counseyl obeve !

“Nyghtyngale, thou spekest wonder feyre.
But, for al that, the sothe is the contreyre ;
For love is in yonge folke but rage,
And in olde folk hit is a grete dotage ;
Who most hit useth, most he shal apeyre ;¹ 170

“For therof cometh mony an hevinesse,
Sorow and care, and mony a grete seknesse,
Dispite, debate, angre, and envye,
Repreve and shame, untrust, and jelosye,
Pride, and myschefe, povert, and wodenesse.

“What ! Lovyng is an office of dispaire,
And oon thing is therin that ys not faire ;
For who that geteth of love a lytil blysse,
But-if he be alway therby ywysse,²
He may ful sone of age have his haire.³ 180

“And therfor, Nyghtyngale, holde the nye ;
For, leve⁴ me wel, for al thy loude crie,
If thou fer or longe be fro thi make,
Thou shalt be as other that be forsake,
And then thou shalt haten as am I.”⁵

“Fye,” quoth she, “on thi name and on the !
The god of Love ne let the nevere ythe !⁶
For thou art wors a thousand folde then wode,
For mony is ful worthie and ful good,
That hadde be noght, ne hadde Love ybe. 190

“For Love his servant evermore amendeth,
And fro al evele tachches him defendeth,
And maketh him to brenne as eny fire,

¹ Be impaired. ² Certainly. ³ That is, gray hair. ⁴ Believe
that is, be called unfaithful. ⁵ Thrive.

In trouthe and in worschippeful desire,
And, whom him liketh, joy ynogh him sendeth."

"Ye, Nyghtyngale," she seyde, "holde the
now stille !

For Love hath no resoun but his wille ;
For ofte sithe untrew folke he esith,
And trewe folke so bittirly displeseth,
That for defaute of grace he let hem spille. 200

"With suche a lorde wolde I never be,
For he is blynde alwey and may not se,
And when he lyeth he not ne when he fayleth.
And in this court ful selde trouthe avayleth,
So dyverse and so wilful eke ys he."

Then toke I of the nyghtyngale kepe,
She kest a sighe out of her herte depe,
And seyde, "Alas, that I ever was bore !
I can for tene seye not oon worde more ;"
And ryght with that she brast on for to wepe.

"Alas !" quoth she, "my herte wol to-breke
To here thus this false birdde speke
Of Love, and of his worshipful servyse.
Now, god of Love, thou helpe me in summe
wise,

That I may on this cukkow ben awreke."

Methoughte then that I stert up anone,
And to the broke I ran and gatte a stone,
And at the cukkow hertely I caste ;
And he for drede gan flye away ful faste,
And glad was I when that he was igon. 220

And evermore the cukkow, as he fley,

He seyde, "Farewel, farewel, papyngay!"
 As thogh he had iscorned, as thocht me;
 But ay I hunted him fro tre to tre,
 Tille he was fer al out of syght away.

And then come the nyghtyngalè to me,
 And seyde, "Frende, forsoth I thanke the,
 That thou hast lyked me thus to rescowe;
 And oon avowe to love I wol allowe,
 That al this May I wol thy singer be." 230

I thanked her, and was ryght wel apayed:
 "Yee," quoth she, "and be thou not amayed,
 Thogh thou have herde the cukkow er then me.
 For, if I lyve, hit shal amended be
 The nexte May, yf I be not affrayed.¹

"And oon thing I wol rede the also,
 Ne leve² thou not the cukkow, loves fo,
 For al that he hath seyde is strong lesinge."
 "Nay, nay," quoth I, "ther shal nothing me
 bringe

Fro love, and yet he doth me mekil wo." 240

"Yee? Use thou," quoth she, "this mede-
 cyne,

Every day this May er that thou dyne, —
 Goo loke upon the fresshe flour the daysye,
 And, thogh thou be for wo in poynt to dye,
 That shal ful gretly lyssen³ the of thy pyne.

"And loke alwey that thou be good and
 trewe,
 And I wol singe oon of my songes newe

¹ Alarmed. ² Believe. ³ Lessen.

“WE WOL HAVE A PARLEMENT.” 563

For love of the, as loude as I may crie : ”

And then she began this songe ful hye,

“ *I shrewe hem al that be to love untrewe.* ”

And when she hadde songen hit out to the
ende, 251

“ Now fairewel,” quoth she, “ for I moste
wende, —

And god of Love, that can ryght wel and may,
As mekil joy sende yow this day,
As ever yet he eny lover sende ! ”

Thus toke the nyghtyngale hir leve of me.
I pray to God he alway with her be,
And joy of love he sende her evermore,
And shilde us fro the cuckow and his lore,
For ther is non so fals a bridde as he. 260

Forthe she fley, the gentil nyghtyngale,
To alle the briddes that werene in the dale,
And gat hem alle into a place yn fere,
And hem besoughten that they wolden here
Her dysese, and thus began her tale.

“ Ye knowe wel, hit is not fro yow hidde,
How that the cuckow and I fast have chidde,
Ever sithe that hit was dayes lyght ;
I prey yow alle that ye do me ryght
Of that foule fals, unkynde bridde.” 270

Then spake oon brid for al, by oon assent :
“ This mater asketh good avysement ;
For we be fewe briddes her in fere,
And soth hit ys, the cuckow is not here,
And therfore we wol have a parlement.

“ And therat shal the egle be, our lorde,
 And other perys ¹ that ben of recorde,
 And the cuikow shal be after ysent ;
 And ther shal be geven the jugement,
 Or elles we shul make summe acorde. 280

“ And this shal be, withouten any nay,
 The morowe, Seynte Valentynes day,
 Under the maple that is feire and grene,
 Before the chambre window of the Quene,
 At Wodestok upon the grene lay.” ²

She thanked hem, and then her leve she
 toke,
 And fleye into an hawthorne by the broke,
 And ther she sate and songe upon the tre,
 “ Terme of my lyve love hath withholde me,”
 So loude that I with that song awoke. 290

O lewde boke, with thy foule rudenesse,
 Sith thou hast neyther beaute ne eloquence,
 Who hath the caused or geve the hardynesse
 For to appere in my ladyes presence ?
 I am ful siker ³ thou knowest hyr benivolence,
 Ful agreable to alle hir obeyinge,
 For of al goode she is the beste lyvyng.

Alas ! that thou ne haddest worthynesse,
 To shewe to hir somme plesaunt sentence,
 Sithen that she hath, thorgh hir gentillesse, 300
 Acceptede the servant to hir digne reverence !

¹ Peers. ² Grass land, lawn. ³ Sure.

O ! me repenteth that I ne hadde science,
And leyser als, to make the more florysshynge,
For of al goode she ys the beste lyvyng.

Beseche hir mekely with alle lowlynesse,
Though I be ferre from hir in absence,
To thenke on my trouthe and stidfastnesse,
And to abregge of my sorwes the violence,
Whiche caused ys, wherof knoweth your sapi-
ence,
She lyke ¹ amonge to notefye me hir lykyng ;
For of alle goode she is the beste lyvyng. 311

Lenvoye.

Aurore of gladnesse, and day of lustynesse,
Lucerne ² a nyght with heavenly influence
Enlumyned, rote of Beaute and goodenesse,
Suspuries ³ which I effunde ⁴ in silence !
Of grace, I beseche, alege let your writynge
Now of al goode, syth ye be beste lyvyng.

A GOODLY BALLADE OF CHAUCER.

MOTHER of norture, best beloved of alle,
And fresshest flour, to whom good thrift God
sende !
Your childe, if it lust you me so to calle,
Al be I unable my selfe so to pretende,

¹ May please. ² Lamp. ³ Sighs ⁴ Pour out.

To your discrecion I recomende
 Myn herte and al, with every circumstance,
 Al holy to be under your governaunce.

Moste desire I, and have and ever shal,
 Thyng whiche might your hertes ease amende
 Have me excused, my power is but smal ; 1c
 Nathelesse, of right, ye oughte to commende
 My goode wille, which fayne wolde entende
 To do you servyce ; for al my suffysaunce
 Is holy to be under your governaunce.

*Meulx un*¹ in herte which never shal appalle,
 Aye fresshe and newe, and right glad to dispende
 My tyme in your service, what so befalle,
 Besechyng your excellence to defende
 My symplenesse, if ignoraunce offende
 In any wyse ; sythe that myn affyaunce 20
 Is holy ben under your governaunce.

Daisy of lyght, very grounde of comforte,
 The Sonnes doughter ye hight, as I rede ;
 For whan he westreth, farwel your disporte !
 By your nature anon, right for pure drede
 Of the rude night that with his boystous wede
 Of derkenesse shadoweth our emyspere,
 Than closen ye, my lives lady dere !

Dawnyng the Day to his kynde² resorte,
 Lan Phebus your father with his stremes rede
 Adorneth the morowe, consumyng the sorte 3.
 Of misty cloudes that wolden overlede
 Trewe humble hertes with her mistyhede,

¹ Better one. ² Natural.

Nere comforte a-dayes, whan eyen clere
Disclose and sprede my lyves lady dere, —

Je wouldray,¹ but greate God disposeth
And maketh casuel, by his provydence,
Suche thyng as mannes frele witte purposeth,
Al for the best, if that our conscience
Nat grutche it, but in humble pacience 40
It receyve : for God saythe withoute fable,
A faythful herte ever is acceptable.

Cautels² who so useth gladly, gloseth ;
To eschewe suche it is right high prudence ;
What ye sayd ones myn herte opposeth,
That my writyng japes in your absence
Pleased you moche better than my presence.
Yet can I more ; ye be nat excusable,
A faythful herte ever is acceptable.

Quaketh my penne ; my spyrit supposeth 50
That in my writyng ye fynde wol some offence ;
Myn herte welkeneth³ thus ; anon it ryseth ;
Nowe hotte, nowe colde, and efte in fervence :
That mysse is, is caused of neglygence,
And not of malyce ; therfore bethe mercyable ;
A faythful herte ever is acceptable.

LENVOYE.

Forthe, complaynt ! forthe, lackyng eloquence !
Forthe, lytle letter, of endytyng lame !
I have besought my ladyes sapyence⁴

¹ I would. ² Craft. ³ Withereth. ⁴ Wisdom.

Of thy behalfe, to accept in game 60
 Thyn inabylyte ; do thou the same :
 Abyde ! have more yet ! Je serve Jouesse.¹
 Nowe forth I close the in holy Venus name !
 The shal uncloze my hertes governeresse.

A PRAISE OF WOMEN.

AL tho that lyste of women evyl to speke,
 And sayn of hem worse than they deserve,
 I praye to God that her neckes to-breke,
 Or on some evyl dethe mote tho janglers sterve ;
 For every man were holden hem to serve,
 And do hem worship, honour, and servyce,
 In every maner that they best coude devyse.

For we oughte first to thinke on what manere
 They bring us forth, and what payn they endure
 First in our byrth, and syth² fro yere to yere 10
 How busely they done hir busy cure,³
 To kepe us fro every misaventure
 In our youthe, whan we have no might
 Our selfe to kepe, neither by day nor nyght.

Alas ! howe may we say on hem but wele,
 Of whom we were fostred and ybore,
 And ben al our sucoure, and ever trewe as stele,
 And for our sake ful ofte they suffre sore ?
 Withoute women were al our joye lore ;
 Wherefore we ought alle women to obeye 20
 In al goodnesse ; I can no more saye.

¹ I serve Joyous. ² Then. ³ Care.

This is wel knowen, and hath ben or¹ this,
That women ben cause of alle lightnesse,²
Of knyghthode, norture, eschewyng al malis,
Encrease of worshyp, and of alle worthynesse ;
Therto curteys and meke, and ground of al
goodnesse,

Glad and mery, and trewe in every wyse
That any gentyl herte can thynke or devyse.

And though any wolde truste to your un
truthe, 29

And to your fayre wordes wold aught assente,
In goode fayth me thynketh it were gret ruthe,
That other women sholde for hir gylt be shent,³
That never knew, ne wiste nought of hir entent,
Ne lyst not to here the fayre words ye write,
Which ye you payne fro day to day tendyte.

But who may beware of your tales untrewe,
That ye so busily paynt and endite ?
For ye wyl swere that ye never knewe,
Ne sawe the woman, neyther moche ne lyte,⁴
Save onely her to whom ye hadde delite, 40
As for to serve of al that ever ye seye,
And for her love must ye nedes deye.

Then wyl ye swere that ye knewe never before
What Love was, ne his dredful observaunce,
But nowe ye fele that he can wounde sore ;
Wherfore ye putte you into her governaunce,
Whom Love hath ordeyned you to serve and do
plesaunce

¹ Ere. ² Joyousness. ³ Ruined for their fault ⁴ Little.

With al your might your lytel lyves space,
Whiche endeth sone but if she do you grace.

And then to bedde wylle ye soone drawe, 50
And sone sicke ye wylle you than fayne,
And swere faste your lady hath you slawe,
And brought you sudeynly so high a payne
That fro your deth may no man you restrayne,
With a daungerous loke of her eyen two,
That to your dethe muste ye nedes go.

Thus wylle ye morne, thus wylle ye sighe sore,
As though your herte anon in two wolde breste,
And swere faste that ye may live no more ;
“ Myne owne lady ! that might, if ye leste, 60
Bringe myn herte somdele into reste,
As if you lyst mercy on me to have ; ”
Thus your untrouth wyl ever mercy crave.

Thus wol ye playne, thogh ye nothyng smerte,
These innocent creatures for to begyle,
And swere to hem, so wounded is your herte
For her love, that ye may lyve no whyle,
Scarsly so longe as one mighte go a mile,
So hyeth dethe to bringe you to an ende, 69
But if your soverayn lady lyst you to amende.

And if for routhe she comforte you in any
wyse
For pyte of your false othes sere,
So that innocent weneth that it be as you devyse
And weneth your herte be as she may here,
Thus for to comfort and somewhat do you
chere ;

Than wol these janglers deme of her ful ylle,
And sayne that ye have her fully at your wylle.

Lo, howe redy her tonges ben, and preste
To speke harme of women causelesse !

Alas ! why might ye not as wel saye the beste,
As for to deme hem thus gyltelesse ? 81

In your herte, ywis, there is no gentylnesse,
That of your owne gylt lyst thus women fame ;¹
Now, by my trouth, me thynke ye be to blame.

For of women cometh this worldly wele,
Wherfore we oughte to worship hem evermore ;
And thou it mishap one, we oughte for to hele,²
For it is al through our false lore,
That day and night we payne us evermore
With many an othe these women to begyle 90
With false tales, and many a wicked wyle.

And if falshede shulde be reckened and tolde
In women, iwys ful trouthe were,
Not as in men, by a thousand fold ;
Fro alle vices, iwys they stande clere,
In any thing that ever I coude of here,
But if³ entysing of these men it make,
That hem to flatteren connen never slake.

I wolde fayne wete⁴ wher ever ye coude here,
Withoute mennes tysing,⁵ what women dyd
amis, 100
For ther⁶ ye may get hem ye lye fro yere to
yere,

And many a gabbing ye make to hem, iwys ;

Defame. ² Hide. ³ Except. ⁴ Know. ⁵ Enticing. ⁶ That.

For I could never here ne knowen ere this,
Where ever ye coude fynde in any place,
That ever women besoughte you of grace.

There ye you payne with al your fulle
 might,
With al your herte, and al your besynesse,
To pleasen hem bothe by day and night,
Prayeng hem of her grace and gentylnesse,
To have pyte upon youre greate distresse, 110
And that they wolde on your payne have routhe,
And slee you not, sens ye meane but trouthe.

Thus may ye see that they ben fautelesse,
And innocent to alle your werkes slie,
And alle your craftes that touche falsnesse,
They knowe hem not, ne may hem not espye ;
So sweare ye that ye muste nedes die,
But if they wolde, of hir womanheed,
Upon you rewe, er that ye be deed.

And than your "lady" and your "hertes
 quene" 120

Ye calle hem, and therewith ye syghe sore,
And say, "My lady, I trowe that it be sene
In what plite that I have lyved ful yore ;
But nowe I hope that ye wol no more
In these peynes suffre me for to dwelle,
For of al goodnesse, iwys, ye be the welie."

Lo, whiche a paynted processe can ye make
These harmlesse creatures for to begyle !
And whan they slepe, ye payne you to wake,
And to bethinke you on many a wicked wyle

But ye shal see the day that ye shal curse the
whyle 131

That ye so besyly dyde your entent
Hem to begyle, that falshede never mente.

For this ye knowe wel, though I wolde lie,
In women is al trouthe and stedfastnesse ;
For in good faythe I never of hem sye
But moche worshyp, bounte,¹ and gentylnesse,
Right comyng, fayre, and ful of mekenesse,
Good and glad, and lowly, I you ensure,
Is this goodly angelyke creature. 140

And if it happe a man be in disease,²
She dothe her busynesse and her fulle peyne
With al her might, him to comforte and please
If fro his disease she mighte him restreyne ;
In word ne dede, iwys, she wol not fayne,
But with al her might she dothe her besynesse
To bringe him out of his hevynesse.

Lo, what gentyllesse these women have,
If we coude knowe it for our rudenesse !
How besy they be us to kepe and save, 150
Both in heale,³ and also in sicknesse !
And alway right sory for our distresse,
In every maner ; thus shewe they routhe,
That in hem is al goodnesse and trouthe.

And syth we fynde in hem gentylnesse and
trouth,
Worshyp, bounte, and kyndenesse evermore,
Let never this gentyllesse through your slouth

¹ Goodness. ² Discomfort. ³ Health.

In hir kynde trouthe be aught forlore
 That in woman is, and hath yben ful yore,
 For in reverence of the hevens Quene, 160
 We oughte to worshyp alle women that bene.

For of alle creatures that ever were get and
 borne,

This wote ye wel, a woman was the beste ;
 By her was recovered the blysse that we hadde
 lorne,

And thurgh the woman shal we come to reste,
 And ben ysaved, if that our selfe leste ;
 Wherefore, me thynketh, if that we hadde grace,
 We oughten honour women in every place.

Therefore I rede that, to our lyves ende, 169
 Fro this tyme forth, while that we have space,
 That we have trespaced, pursue to amende,
 Prayeng our Lady, wel of alle grace,
 To bringe us unto that blysful place,
 There as she and alle goode women shal be
 infere ¹

In heven above, amonge the angels clere.

CHAUCER'S DREAM.²

WHEN Flora, the queene of pleasaunce,
 Hadde whole achieved thobeysaunce
 Of the fresh and newe season,

¹ Together. ² Of this poem, first published by Speght, in 1597 no manuscript is known to exist. Mr. Skeat says that there is no external evidence of its genuineness and many internal indications to the contrary effect.

Thorow out every region,
 And with her mantle whole covert
 That winter made hadde discover ;
 Of aventure,¹ withoute light,
 In May, I lay upon a night
 Alone, and on my lady thoughte,
 And how the Lord that her wroughte 10
 Couth well entaile² in imagery
 And shewed hadde great maistry,
 When he in so little space
 Made such a body and a face,
 So great beauty with swich features
 More than in other creatures.
 And in my thoughtes as I lay
 In a lodge out of the way,
 Beside a well in a forest,
 Where after hunting I tooke rest, 20
 Nature and kind so in me wroughte,
 That halfe on sleepe they me broughte,
 And gan to dreame to my thinking,
 With mind of knowliche like making, —
 For what I dreamed, as me thoughte,
 I saw it, and I slepte nought.
 Wherefore is yet my fulle beleeve,
 That some goode spirit that eve,
 By meane of some curious port,³
 Bare me, where I saw payne and sport ; 30
 But whether it were I woke or slepte,
 Well wot I of, I lough and wepte.

¹ By chance. ² Carve. ³ Mode of conveyance

Wherefore I woll in remembraunce
 Put whole the payne, and the pleasaunce,
 Which was to me axen and hele,¹
 Woulde God ye wist it every dele,
 Or at the least, ye might o night
 Of such another have a sight,
 Although it were to you a payne,
 Yet on the morow ye woulde be fayne, 40
 And wish it mighte longe dure ;
 Then might ye say ye hadde good cure,
 For he that dreameth and weneth he see,
 Much the better yet may hee
 Wite what, and of whom, and where,
 And eke the lasse it woll hindere,
 To thinke, " I see this with mine eene," —
 Iwis this may not dreame bene,
 But signe or signifiunce
 Of hasty thing souning ² pleasaunce. 50

For on this wise upon a night,
 As ye have heard, withoute light,
 Not all wakyng, ne full on sleepe,
 About such houre as lovers weepe
 And crie after here ladies grace,
 Befell me this wonder cace,
 Which ye shall heare and all the wise,
 So wholly as I can devise,
 In playne English evill written,
 For sleepe writer, well ye witten, 60
 Excused is, though he do mis,

¹ Approach of disease and cure. ² Tending to.

More than one that waking is ;
 Wherefore here, of your gentillesse,
 I you requyre my boistousnesse ¹
 Ye lete passe, as thing rude,
 And heareth what I woll conclude ;
 And of the endityng taketh no heed,
 Ne of the tearmes, so God you speed,
 But let all passe as nothing were,
 For thus befell, as ye shall here.

70

Within an yle me thought I was,
 Where wall and gate was all of glasse,
 And so was closed round about
 That leavelesse ² none come in ne out,
 Uncouth and straunge to beholde,
 For every gate of fine golde
 A thousand fanes, ³ aie turning,
 Entuned had, and briddes singing,
 Divers, and on each fane a paire,
 With open mouth again thaire ; ⁴
 And of a sute were all the toures,
 Subtily corven after floures,
 Of uncouth colours during ⁵ aye,
 That never bene none ⁶ seene in May,
 With many a small turret hie ;
 But man on live could I non sie,
 Ne creatures, save ladies play,
 Which were such of here array

80

¹ P. *requis*. ² Without leave. ³ Vanes. ⁴ Against, or towards
 the air. ⁵ Enduring. ⁶ None such.

That, as me thought, of goodlihead
They passeden all, and womanhead.

90

For to behold hem daunce and singe,
It seemede like none earthly thinge,
Such was their uncouth countinaunce¹
In every play of right usaunce ;
And of one age everichone
They seemed all, save onely one,
Which had of yeeres suffisaunce,
For she mighte neyther sing ne daunce ;
But yet her countenaunce was so glad
As she so fewe yeeres had had

100

As any lady that was there,
And as little it did her dere,²
Of lustines to laugh and tale³
As she hadde full stuffed a male⁴
Of disportes and newe playes.
Fayre hadde she been in her daies,
And maistresse seemede well to be
Of all that lusty companie ;
And so she might, I you ensure,
For one the conningeste⁵ creature
She was, and so said everichone,
'That ever her knew, there faylede none,
For she was sober and well avised,
And from every fault disguised,
And nothing usede but faith and truth ;
That she nas young it was great ruth,⁶

110

¹ Unusual behavior. ² Harm. ³ Tell tales. ⁴ Budget (Fr
as the trunk). ⁵ Most knowing. ⁶ Pity

For every where and in ech place
 She governed her, that in grace
 She stode alway with poore and riche,
 That, at a word, was none her liche, 120
 Ne halfe so able maistres¹ to be
 To such a lusty companie.

Befell me so, when I avised²
 Hadde the yle that me suffised,
 And whole thestate every where,
 That in that lusty yle was there,
 Which was more wonder to devise
 Than the joieux paradise,
 I dare well saye ; for floure ne tree,
 Ne thing wherein pleasaunce mighte bee 130
 There faylede none ; for every wight
 Hadde they desirede, day and night,
 Riches, heale, beauty, and ease,
 With every thing that hem mighte please.
 Thinke and have, it coste no more.
 In such a country there before
 Had I not bene, ne hearde telle
 That lives creature mighte dwelle.

And when I hadde thus all aboute
 The yle avised throughoute 140
 The state, and how they were arayed,
 In my heart I were well payed,³
 And in my selfe I me assured
 That in my body I was well ured,⁴
 Sith I might have such a grace

¹ Mistress. ² Observed. ³ Satisfied. ⁴ Fortuned.

To see the ladies and the place,
 Which were so faire, I you ensure,
 That to my dome,¹ though that Nature
 Would ever strive and do her paine,
 She shoulde not con, ne mow ² attaine 150
 The leaste feature to amende,
 Though she would all her conning spende,
 That to beautie might availe,
 It were but paine and lost travaile,
 Such part in their nativitie
 Was hem alarged ³ of beautie.
 And eke they had a thing notable
 Unto their death, ay durable ;
 And was, that their beauty shoulde dure,
 Which was never seene in creature, 160
 Save onely there, as I trowe,
 It hath not be iwist ne knowe,
 Wherefore I praise, with their conning,
 That during ⁴ beautie, riche thing.
 Hadde they been of their lives certaine,
 They hadde been quite of every paine.
 And when I wende ⁵ thus all have seene,
 The state, the riches, that mighte beene,
 That me thought impossible were
 To see one thing more than was there, 170
 That to beauty or glad conning
 Serve or availe might any thing ;
 All scdainly, as I there stood,

¹ Judgment. ² Might. ³ Given largely ⁴ Enduring ⁵ Sup-
 posed.

This lady that couthe so much good,
 Unto me came with smiling chere,
 And saide, "*Benedicite!* this yere
 Saw I never man here but you!
 Tell me how ye come hider now?
 And your name, and where ye dwelle?
 And whom ye seeke eke mote ye telle, 180
 And how ye come be to this place;
 The soth well told may cause you grace;
 And els ye mote prisoner be
 Unto the ladies here, and me,
 That have the governaunce of this yle:"
 And with that word she gan to smile,
 And so did all the lusty rout
 Of ladies that stood her about.

"Madame," quod I, "this night ipast,
 Lodged I was and slepte fast 190
 In a forest beside a wellle,
 And now am here, how should I telle?
 Wot I not by whose ordinance,
 But onely Fortunes purveiance,
 Which puteth many, as I gesse,
 To travaile, paine and businesse,
 And letteth¹ nothing for their truth,
 But some sleeth eke, and that is ruth;
 Wherefore, I doubt² her brittilnes,
 Her variance and unsteadfastnes, 200
 So that I am as yet afraid,
 And of my being here amaid;³

¹ Stoppeth. ² Fear. ³ Amazed.

For wonder thing seemeth me,
 Thus many freshe ladies to see,
 So faire, so cunning, and so yonge,
 And no man dwelling hem amonge.
 Not I not¹ how I hider come.
 Madame," quod I, "this all and some.
 What should I faine a long processe
 To you that seeme such a princesse? 210
 What please you commaund or saye,
 Here I am, you to obaye
 To my power, and all fulfille,
 And prisoner bide at your wille,
 Till ye duly enformed be
 Of every thing ye aske me."

This lady there, right well apaid,²
 Me by the hande tooke, and saide,
 "Welcome, prisoner adventurus!
 Right glad am I ye have said thus, 220
 And for ye doubte³ me to displease,
 I will assay to do you ease:"
 And with that word, ye anon,
 She and the ladies everichon
 Assembled, and to counsaile wente,
 And after that soone for me sente,
 And to me said on this manere,
 Word for word, as ye shall here.

"To see you here us thinke marvaile,
 And how withoute bote or saile, 230
 By any subtilty or wyle,

¹ I know not. ² Pleased. ³ Fear.

Ye get have entre in this yle ;
 But not for that ; yet shall ye see
 That we gentille women bee,
 Loth to displease any wight,
 Notwithstanding our greate right.
 And for ye shall well understonde
 The olde custome of this londe,
 Which hath continued many yere,
 Ye shall well wete ¹ that with us here
 Ye may not bide, for causes twaine,
 Which we be purposed you to saine.

240

"Thone ² is this : our ordinance,
 Which is of long continuance,
 Woll not, sothly we you telle,
 That no man here among us dwelle ;
 Wherefore ye mote needs retourne,
 In no wise may ye here sojourne.

"Thother is eke, that our queene
 Out of the realme, as ye may seene,
 Is, and may be to us a charge,
 If we lete you goe here at large.
 For which cause the more we doubte,
 To doe a fault while she is oute,
 Or suffer that may be noysaunce ³
 Againe our old accustomaunce."

250

And whan I hadde these causes twaine
 Heard, O God ! what a paine
 All sodainly about mine hart
 There came at ones, and how smart,

260

¹ Know ² The one. ³ Offense.

In creeping soft, as who shoulde steale,
 Or doe me robbe of all mine heale,¹
 And made me in my thought so fraid,
 That in courage I stode dismaid.
 And standing thus, as was my grace,
 A lady came more than apace,²
 With huge prease³ her about,
 And tolde how the queene without
 Was arived, and woulde come inne,
 Well were they that thider mighte winne!⁴ 270
 They hiede so they woulde not abide
 The bridling their horse to ride;
 By five, by sixe, by two, by three, —
 There was not one abode with me.
 The queene to meet everichone
 They went, and bode with me not one.
 And I after, a soft pase,⁵
 Imagining how to purchase⁶
 Grace of the queene, there to bide,
 Till good fortune some happy guide 280
 Me sende mighte, that woulde me bringe
 Where I was borne to my wonninge;⁷
 For way ne foot⁸ ne knew I none,
 Ne witherward I niste to gone,
 For all was sea about the yle.

No wonder though me liste not smile,
 Seeing the case uncouth and straunge,
 And so in like a perilous chaunge.

¹ Cause me to be robbed of all my health. ² A walk. ³ Crowd
 Attain. ⁴ At a slow pace. ⁵ Obtain. ⁶ Dwelling-place ⁷ Road
 for path.

Imagining thus, walking alone
 I saw the ladies everichone. 290
 So that I mighte somewhat offere,
 Sone after that I drew me nere,
 And tho¹ I was ware of the queene,
 And how the ladies on their kneene,²
 With joyous wordes, gladly advised,
 Her welcomede so that it suffisede,
 Though she princesse hole hadde be
 Of all environed is with see.³

And thus avising, with chere sad,
 All sodainly I was glad, 300
 That greater joy, as mote I thrive,
 I trow hadde never man on live,
 Than I tho, ne hearte more light,
 When of my lady I hadde sight,
 Which with the queene come was there,
 And in one clothing both they were.
 A knight also there, well beseene,
 I saw that come was with the queene,
 Of whome the ladies of that yle
 Had huge wonder longe while ; 310
 Till at the last right soberly,
 The queene her selfe full cunningly,⁴
 With softe wordes in good wise,
 Saide to the ladies young and nise,
 " My sisters, how it hath befalle,
 I trow ye know it one and alle,

¹ Then. ² Knees ³ Had been princess of all that is environed
 by the sea. ⁴ Wisely

That of long time here have I beene,
 Within this yle bidding as queene,
 Living at ease, that never wighte
 More parfit joy have ne mighte ; 320
 And to you been of governance,
 Such as ye found in whole pleasance,
 In every thing as ye knowe,
 After our custome and our lowe ;¹
 Which how they first founde were,
 I trow ye wote all the manere,
 And who the queene is of this yle,
 As I have been longe while,
 Ech seven yeeres mot of usage
 Visit the heavenly armitage,² 330
 Which on a rocke so highe stonds,
 In strange sea out from all londs,
 That to make the pilgrimage
 Is called a long perillous viage ;
 For if the wind be not good frend,
 The journey dures to the end
 Of him that it undertaketh,
 Of twenty thousand one not scapeth.
 Upon which rock groweth a tree,
 That certaine yeeres beareth apples three ; 340
 Which three apples who may have,
 Been from all displeasaunce save,
 That in the seven yeere may falle ;
 This wote ye well one and alle ;
 For the first apple and the hext,³

¹ Law. ² Hermitage. ³ Highest.

Which groweth unto you next,
Hath three vertues notable,
And keepeth youth aie durable,
Beauty and looke, ever in one,
And is the best in everichone.

350

“The second apple red and grene,
Onely with lookes of your yene,¹
You nourisheth in pleasaunce
Better than partridge or fesaunce,
And feedeth every lives² wight
Pleasantly with the sight.

“The third apple of the three,
Which groweth lowest on the tree,
Who it beareth may not faile
That³ to his pleasaunce may availe.

360

So your pleasure and beauty rich,
Your during youth ever iliche,
Your truth, your cunning, and your weale,
Hath aye floured, and your good heale,
Without sicknes or displeasaunce,
Or thing that to you was noysaunce.
So that ye have as goddesses
Lived above alle princesses.

Now is befall, as ye may see ;
To gather these said apples three,
I have not failed againe⁴ the day,
Thitherward to take the way,
Wening to speed as I had ofte.
But whan I come, I find alofte

370

¹ Eyes. ² Live ³ That which. ⁴ Against.

My sister which that here stands,
 Having those apples in her hands,
 Avising¹ hem and nothing said,
 But looked as she were well paid.²
 And as I stood her to beholde,
 Thinking how my joyes were colde, 380
 Sith I those apples have ne mighte,³
 Even with that so came this knighte,
 And in his armes, of me unware,
 Me tooke, and to his ship me bare ;
 And saide, though him I never hadde seen,
 Yet had I long his lady been ;
 Wherefore I shoulde with him wende,
 And he woulde to his lives ende
 My servant be ; and gan to singe
 As one that hadde wonne a riche thinge. 390

“ Tho were my spirits fro me gone,
 So sodainly everichone,
 That in me appearede but death,
 For I felte neither life ne breath,
 Ne good ne harme none I knew ;
 The sodaine paine me was so new,
 That hadde not the hasty grace be
 Of this lady, that fro the tree
 Of her gentilnesse so hied
 Me to comfort, I hadde died ; 400
 And of her three apples, one
 In mine hande there put anōne,
 Which brought againe mind and breath,

¹ Looking at. ² Satisfied. ³ Might not have.

And me recoveredde from the death.
 Wherefore, to her so am I holde,
 That for her alle things do I wolde ;
 For she was lech¹ of all my smart,
 And from great paine so quite mine hart.
 And, as God wote, right as ye heare,
 Me to comforte with friendly cheare 410
 She did her prowesse and her might ;
 And truly eke so dide this knight,
 In that he couth, and ofte said,
 That of my wo he was ill paid,²
 And cursede the ship that hem there broughte,
 The mast, the master that it wroughte.
 And as ech thing mote have an end,
 My sister here, your brother frend,
 Con with her words so womanly
 This knight entreat, and conningly,³ 420
 For mine honour and his also ;
 And saide that with her we shoulde go
 Both in her ship, where she was brought,
 Which was so wonderfully wrought,
 So cleane, so rich, and so araid
 That we were both content and paid ;
 And me to comfort and to please,
 And mine hearte to put at ease,
 She toke great paine in little while,
 And thus hath brought us to this yie, 430
 As ye may see ; wherefore echone,
 I pray you thanke her, one and one,

¹ Physician. ² D'sp'f'ed. ³ Wisely.

As heartily as ye canne devise,
Or imagine in any wise."

At once there tho men mighte **seen**
A world of ladies fall on kneen
Before my lady, that there about
Was left none standing in the rout,
But altogether they went at ones
To kneele ; they sparede not for the stones,
Ne for estate, ne for their blood ; **441**
Well shewede there they couth much good ;
For to my lady they made such feast,
With suche wordes, that the least
So friendly and so faithfully
Said was, and so cunningly,
That wonder was, seing their youthe,
To here the language they couthe,
And wholly how they governed were,
In thanking of my lady there ; **450**
And said by will and maundement,¹
They were at her commaundement,
Which was to me as great a joy,
As winning of the towne of Troy
Was to the hardy Greekes stronge,
Whan they it wan with siege longe,
To see my lady in such a place
So received as she tho was.

And when they talked had a while
Of this and that, and of the yle, **460**
My lady, and the ladies there,

¹ Commandment.

Altogether as they were,
The queene her selfe began to playe,
And to the aged lady saye,
“ Now seemeth you not good it were,
Sith we be altogether here,
To ordaine and devise the best
To set this knight and me at rest ?
For woman is a feble wight
To rere a warre against a knight,
And sith he here is in this place,
At my liste, danger or grace,
It were to me great villany¹
To do him any tyranny ;
But faine I woulde, now will ye here,
In his owne country that he were,
And I in peace, and he at ease ;
This were a way us both to please,
If it mighte be ; I you beseech,
With him hereof ye fall in speech.”

470

480

This lady tho began to smile,
Avising her a little while,
And with glad chere she said anone,
“ Madam, I will unto him gone,
And with him speake, and of him fele
What he desireth every dele.”
And soberly this lady tho,
Her selfe and other ladies two
She tooke with her, and with sad chere,²
Saide to the knyght on this manere :

490

¹ Uncourteous ² Steadfast look.

" Sir, the princes of this yle,
 Whom for your pleasance many mile
 Ye sought have, as I understonde,
 Till at the last ye have her fonde,
 Me sent hath here, and ladies twaine,
 To heare alle thing that ye saine ;
 And for what cause ye have her sought,
 Faine woulde she wote al whol your thought ;
 And why you do her al this wo,
 And for what cause ye be her fo ? 504
 And why, of every wight unware,
 By force ye to your ship her bare,
 That she so nighe was agone,
 That mind ne speech hadde she none,
 But as a painfull creature,
 Dying, abode her adventure ;
 That her to see indure that paine,
 Here weel I say unto you plaine,
 Right on your selfe ye did amisse,
 Seeing how she a princes is." 510

This knight, the which cowthe his good,¹
 Right of his truth meved ² his blood,
 That pale he woxe as any lead,
 And lookt as he woulde be dead.
 Blood was there none in nother cheke,
 Wordlesse he was and semede sicke,
 And so it provede well he was ;
 For withoute moving any paas,³
 All sodainely as thing dying,

¹ Was conscious of his uprightness. ² Moved. ³ Stop.

He fell at once downe sowning,¹ 520

That for his wo this lady, fraide,²

Unto the queene her hyed and saide,

"Cometh on anon, as have ye blisse !

But ³ ye be wise, thing is amisse ;

This knight is dead, or will be soone,

Lo, where he lyeth in a swoone !

Withoute word, or answering

To that I have said, any thing.

Wherefore, I doubte ⁴ that the blame

Mighte be hindering to your name, 530

Which floured hath so many yere,

So longe, that for nothing here,

I would in no wise he dyede.

Wherefore good were that ye hyede ⁵

His life to save at the least ;

And, after that his wo be ceast,

Commaund him void, or dwelle ; ⁶

For in no wise dare I more melle ⁷

Of thing wherein such perill is,

As like is now to fall of this." 540

This queene right tho full of great feare,

With all the ladies present there,

Unto the knight came where he lay,

And made a lady to him say,

"Lo, here the queene, awake for shame !

What will ye doe ? is this good game ?

Why lye ye here ? what is your mind ?

¹ Swooning. ² Alarmed. ³ Unless. ⁴ Fear. ⁵ Hasted. ⁶ Do
part or remain. ⁷ Meddle.

Now is well seene your wit is blind,
To see so many ladies here,
And ye to make none other chere,
But as ye set hem all at noughte ;
Arise, for His love that you boughte ! ”
But what she said, a word not one
He spake, ne answer gave her none.

559

The queene of very pitty tho,
Her worship, and his like also,
To save there she did her paine,
And quoke for feare, and gan to saine
For woe, “ Alas, what shall I doe ?
What shall I say this man unto ?
If he die here, lost is my name,
How shal I play this perillous game ?
If any thing be here amisse,
It shall be said, it rigour is,
Whereby my name impayre mighte,
And like to die eke is this knyghte.”
And with that word her hand she laide
Upon his brest, and to him saide,
“ Awake, my knight ! lo, it am I
That to you speake ; now tell me why
Ye fare thus, and this paine endure,
Seing ye be in country sure,
Among such friends that would you heale,
Your hertes ease eke and your weale ;
And if I wist what you might ease,
Or know the thing that might you please,
I you ensure it shoulde not faile,

560

570

That to your heale you might availe :
Wherefore, with all my heart I praye
Ye rise, and let us talke and playe. 580
And see ! how many ladies here
Be comen for to make good chere."

All was for nought, for still as stone
He lay and word ne spoke none.
Long while was or he mighte braide,¹
And of all that the queene hadde said
He wiste no word, but at the laste,
" Mercy," twise he cryede faste,
That pittie was his voice to heare,
Or to behold his painefull cheare, 590
Which was not fained well to sein,²
Both by his visage and his eyn,
Which on the queene at once he caste,
And sighed as he woulde to-braste ;³
And after that he shrighthe⁴ so
That wonder was to see his wo ;
For sith that payne was first named,
Was never more wofull payne attained ;
For with voice dead he gan to plaine,
And to himselfe these wordes saine : 600

" I wofull wight, full of malure,⁵
Am worse than dead, and yet I dure,
Maugre⁶ any payne or death,
Against my will I fele my breath !
Why nam I dead, sith I ne serve,

¹ Revive. ² See. ³ Burst to pieces. ⁴ Shrieked. ⁵ Unhappy.
ness (Fr. *malheur*). ⁶ Despite (Fr. *malgré*).

And sith my lady will me sterve? ¹
Where art thou, Death? art thou agast?
Well, shall we meete yet at the last;
Though thou thee hide, it is for nought,
For where thou dwelst thou shalt be sought.
Maugre thy subtill, double face, 611
Here will I die, right in this place,
To thy dishonour and mine ease;
Thy manner is no wight to please.
What needes thee, sith I thee seche,
So thee to hide my payne to eche? ²
And well wost thou I will not live,
Who woulde me al this world here give;
For I have with my cowardise
Lost joy, and heale, and my servise, 620
And made my soveraigne lady so,
That while she liveth I trow my fo
She will be ever to her end;
Thus have I neither joy ne frend.
Wote I not whether hast ³ or sloth
Hath caused this now, by my troth!
For at the hermitage full hie,
When I her saw first with mine eye,
I hiede till I was alofte,
And made my pace small and softe, 630
Till in mine armes I had her faste,
And to my ship bare at the laste.
Whereof she was displeased so,
That endles there seemed her wo,

¹ Kill. ² Increase (eke). ³ Haste.

And I thereof hadde so great fere,
That me repent that I come there.
Which hast, I trow, gan her displease,
And is the cause of my disease.”

And with that word he gan to cry,
“Now, Death, Death !” twy or thry, 640

And motred, wot I not what, of slouth ;
And even with that, the queene, of routh,¹
Him in her armes tooke and sayde,
“Now, mine owne knight, be not evill apaid²
That I a lady to you sente

To have knowledge of your entente,
For, in good faith, I meante but well,
And would ye wist it every dele,
Nor will not do to you ywis ;”

And with that word she gan him kisse, 650
And prayed him rise, and saide she woulde³

His welfare, by her truth ; and tolde
Him how she was for his disease⁴
Right sory, and faine would him please,
His lyfe to save. These wordes tho
She saide to him, and many mo
In comforting ; for from the paine
She would he were delivered faine.

The knight tho up caste his een,
And whan he saw it was the queen, 660
That to him hadde these wordes said,
Right in his wo he gan to braide,
And him up dresseth for to knele,

¹ Pity ² Displeased. ³ Willed. ⁴ Discomfort.

The queene avising ¹ wonder wele.
 But as he rose he overthrew ;
 Wherefore the queene, yet eft ² anew,
 Him in her armes anon tooke,
 And pitiously gan on him looke ;
 But for all that nothyng she sayde,
 Ne spake not like she were well payd, 670
 Ne no chere made, nor sad ne light,
 But all in one to every wight
 There was seene conning with estate,³
 In her without noise or debate ;
 For, save onely a looke piteous,
 Of womanhead undispiteous,
 That she showed in countenance ;
 For seemed her hearte from obeisance,
 And not for that she did her reine ⁴
 Him to recure ⁵ from the peine, 680
 And his hearte to put at large ; ⁶
 For her entent was to his barge
 Him to bryng against the eve,
 With certaine ladies, and take leve,
 And pray him of his gentilnesse
 To suffer her thennesforth in peace,
 As other princes hadde before ;
 And from thennesforth for evermore
 She would him worship in all wise,
 That gentilnesse mighte devise, 690
 And payne her wholly to fulfille,
 In honour, his pleasure and wille.

¹ Observing. ² Again. ³ Wisdom with dignity ⁴ Restrain
 Recover. ⁵ Liberty.

And luring thus this knightes wo,
 Present the queene and other mo,
 My lady, and many another wight,
 Ten thousand shippes at a sight
 I saw come over the wawy¹ flood,
 With saile and ore ; that as I stood
 Hem to behold, I gan marvaile
 From whom mighte come so many a saile ; 700
 For sith the tyme that I was bore,
 Such a navie there before
 Had I not seene, ne so arayed,
 That for the sight my hearte playede
 To and fro within my breste
 For joy. Long was or² it woulde reste,
 For there was sailes full of floures ;
 After, castels with huge toures,
 Seeming full of armes brighte,
 That wonder lusty was the sighte ; 710
 With large toppes, and mastes longe,
 Richly depeint,³ and rear amonge.⁴
 At certain times gan repaire
 Smalle birdes, downe from thaire,
 And on the shippes bounds about
 Sate and song with voice full out,
 Ballades and layes right joyously,
 As they cowth in their harmony,
 That you to write that I there see,
 Mine excuse is it may not be ; 720
 For-why the matter were to long

¹ Wavy ² Ere. ³ Adorned. ⁴ In the midst.

To name the birds and write their song :
 Whereof, anon, the tydings there
 Unto the queene soone brought were,
 With many "alas," and many a doubt,
 Shewing the shippes there without.

Tho gan the aged lady weepe,
 And said, "Alas, our joy on sleepe
 Soone shall be brought, ye, long or ¹ night,
 For we descried been by this knight ! 730
 For certes, it may none other be,
 But he is of yond companie,
 And they be come him here to seche ;"
 And with that word her faylede speche.

"Withoute remedy we be destroid,"
 Full oft said all, and gan conclude,
 Holy at once at the laste,
 That best was shit ² their gates faste,
 And arme hem all in good langage,
 As they hadde done of old usage, 740
 And of faire wordes make their shot.
 'This was their counsaile and the knot,³
 And other purpose tooke they none ;
 But armed thus forth they gone
 Toward the walles of the yle.
 But or they come there long while,
 They mette the greate lord of bove,
 That called is the god of Love,
 That hem avised ⁴ with such chere,
 Right as he with hem angry were : 750

¹ Ere. ² Shut. ³ Sum. ⁴ Observed.

Avayled hem not here walls of glasse,
 This mighty lord let¹ not to passe,
 The shutting of their gates faste ;
 All they had ordaind was but waste.
 For when his shippes hadde founde land,
 This lord anon, with bow in hand,
 Into this yle with huge prease²
 Hiede fast, and woulde not cease
 Till he came there the knight lay ;
 Of queene ne lady by the way 760
 Tooke he no heede but forth past,
 And yet all followed at the last.

And when he came where lay the knight,
 Well shewed he he hadde great might,
 And forth the queene called anone,
 And all the ladies everichone,
 And to hem said, " Is not thus routh,
 To see my servaunt for his trouth
 Thus leane, thus sicke, and in this payne,
 And wot not unto whom to playne, 770
 Save onely one withoute mo,
 Which might him heale and is his fo ? "
 And with that word his heavy brow
 He shewede the queene and lookede row.³
 This mighty lord forth tho anone,
 With o looke her faultes echone
 He can her shew ; in little speech
 Commaunding her to be his lech.⁴

¹ Hindered. ² Crowd. ³ Rough. Cf *Troilus and Cryseyde*.
 206. ⁴ Physician.

Withouten more, shortly to saye, 779
 He thoughte the queene soone should obaye,
 And in his hond he shoke his bowe,
 And saide right soone he woulde be knowe.
 And for she hadde so long refused
 His service, and his lawes not used,
 He let her wite that he was wroth,
 And bent his bow and forth he goth
 A pace or two, and even there
 A large draught,¹ up to his eare,
 He drew, and with an arrow grounde
 Sharpe and new, the queene a wounde 790
 He gave, that pierced unto the hearte,
 Which afterward full sore gan smerte,
 And was not whole of many yeare.
 And even with that, "Be of good cheare,
 My knight," quod he, "I will thee hele,
 And thee restore to parfite wele,²
 And for each payne thou hast endured,
 To have two joyes thou art cured."

And forth he paste by the rout,
 With sober cheare walking about, 800
 And what he said I thoughte to heare,
 Well wist he which his servaunts were.
 And as he passed anon he fond
 My lady, and her tooke by the hond,
 And made her chere as a goddesse,
 And of beaute called her princesse;
 Of bounty³ eke gave her the name,

¹ Pull of the bow-string. ² Wealth, well-being. ³ Goodness.

And saide there was nothyng blame
 In her, but she was vertuous,
 Saving she woulde no pity use ; 810
 Which was the cause that he her soughte,
 To putte that far out of her thoughte.
 And sith she hadde whole richesse
 Of womanhead and friendlinesse,
 He said it was nothing sitting ¹
 To voide pity his owne leggyng.²
 And gan her preach and with her playe,
 And of her beauty told her aie,
 And saide she was a creature
 Of whom the name should endure, 820
 And in bookes full of pleasaunce
 Be put for ever in remembraunce.
 And, as me thoughte, more friendly
 Unto my lady, and goodlely
 He spake, than any that was there ;
 And for thapples I trow it were,
 That she had in possession ;
 Wherefore, long in procession,
 Many a pace, arme under other,
 He welke, and so dide with none other ; 830
 But what he woulde commaund or saye,
 Forthwith needes all must obaye,
 And what he desired at the lest,
 Of my lady, was by request.

And when they long together hadde beene

¹ Bearing. ² To drive pity out of its own lodging (*i. e.*, her heart).

He broughte my lady to the queene,
 And to her saide, "So God you speed,
 Shew grace, consente, that is need."
 My lady tho, full conningly,
 Right well avised and womanly 840
 Downe gan to kneele upon the floures,
 Which Aprill nourished hadde with shoures,
 And to this mighty lord gan saye,
 "That pleaseth you, I woll obaye,
 And me restraine from other thought,
 As ye woll all thing shall be wrought."
 And with that word kneeling she quoke.
 That mighty lord in armes her tooke,
 And said, "Ye have a servaunt one,
 That truer living is there none ; 850
 Wherefore, good were, seeing his trouth,
 That on his paines ye hadde routh,
 And purpose you to heare his speeche,
 Fully avised him to leech ;¹
 For of one thing ye may be sure,
 He will be yours while he may dure."

And with that word, right on his game,
 Me thought he lough, and tolde my name,
 Which was to me marvaile and fere,
 That what to do I niste² there ; 860
 Ne whether was me bet or none
 There to abide, or thens to gone.
 For well wend³ I my lady wolde
 Imagen or deme that I hadde told

¹ Heal. ² Ne wist, knew not. ³ Thought.

My counsaile whole, or made complaint
 Unto that lord, that mighty saint,
 So verily each thing unsought
 He said, as he had knowne my thought,
 And tolde my trouth and mine unease
 Bet than I couth have for mine ease,
 Though I hadde studied all a weke.
 Well wiste that lord that I was seke
 And woulde be leched wonder faine,
 No man me blame, mine was the paine.

870

And when this lord had alle said,
 And longe with my lady plaid,
 She gan to smile with spirit glade.
 This was the answeere that she made,
 Which put me there in double peine,
 That what to do ne what to seine
 Wist I not, ne what was the beste.
 Ferre¹ was my herte then fro his reste,
 For, as I thoughte, that smiling signe
 Was token that the heart encline
 Woulde to requestes reasonable ;
 Because smiling is favorable
 To every thing that shall thrive.
 So thought I tho, anon, blive,²
 That wordlesse answeere in no toun
 Was tane³ for obligatioun,
 Ne called surety in no wise,
 Amongst hem that called been wise.

880

890

Thus was I in a joyous dout,

¹ Further. ² Quickly. ³ Taken

Sure and unsurest of that rout ;
 Right as mine hearte thought it were,
 So more or lesse wexe my fere,
 That if one thought made it wele
 Another shent ¹ it every dele.
 Till, at the last, I couthe no more,
 But purposed, as I dide before, 900
 To serve truly my lives space,
 Awaiting ever the yeare of grace,
 Which may falle yet or I sterve,²
 If it please her that I serve,
 And served have, and woll do ever,
 For thyng is none that me is lever ³
 Than her service, whose presence
 Mine heaven is whole, and her absence
 An hell, full of divers paines,
 Whych to the death full oft me straines.⁴ 910
 Thus in my thoughtes as I stood,
 That unneth ⁵ felt I harme ne good,
 I saw the queene a little paas ⁶
 Come where this mighty lorde was,
 And kneelede downe in presence there
 Of all the ladies that there were,
 With sober countenaunce avised,⁷
 In fewe wordes that well suffised ;
 And to this lord anon present
 A bill,⁸ wherein whole her entent 920
 Was written ; and how she besoughte,

¹ Destroyed. ² Ere I die. ³ Preferable. ⁴ Presses. ⁵ Scarcely
 Slowly. ⁷ Cautious. ⁸ Letter.

As he knew every will and thoughte,
That of his godhead and his grace
He woulde forgive all old trespace,
And undispleased be of time past,
For she would ever be stedfast,
And in his service to the death
Use every thought while she had breath ;
And sight and wept, and said no more.

Within was written all the sore.¹

930

At whyche bill the lord gan smile,
And said he woulde within that yle
Be lord and syre, both east and west,
And cald it there his newe conquest,
And in great counsell tooke the queene.

Long were the tales ² hem betweene,
And over her bill he reade thrise,
And wonder gladly gan devise ³

Her features faire and her visage,
And bad good thrift on that image ;

940

And saied he trowed her compleint
Should after cause he be corseint,⁴

And in his sleeve he putte the bille,
Was there none that knew his wille.

And forth he walke apace about

Beholding all the lusty rout,

Halfe in a thought with smiling chere ;⁵

Fill at the last, as ye shall here,

He turned unto the queene ageine,

¹ Grievance. ² Discourses, conferences. ³ Observe. ⁴ Saint
Fr *corps*, body, *saint*, holy). ⁵ Countenance.

And saide, "To morne, here in this pleine,
 I woll ye be, and alle yours, 951
 That purposed ben to weare flours,
 Or of my lusty colour ¹ use ;
 It may not be to you excuse,
 Ne none of youres in no wise,
 That able be to my servise ;
 For as I said have here before,
 I will be lord for evermore
 Of you, and of this yle, and alle,
 And of all youres, that have shalle 96a
 Joy, peace, ease, or in plesaunce
 Your lives use without noysaunce ; ²
 Here will I in state be seene," —
 And turned his visage to the queene, —
 "And you give knowledge of my wille,
 And a full answeere of your bille."

Was there no nay, ne wordes none,
 But very obeisaunt seemed echone,
 Queene and other that were there,
 Well seemed it they hadde great fere, 97c
 And there tooke lodging every knight,
 Was none departed ³ of that night.
 And some to read olde romances,
 Hem occupied for their pleasances,
 Some to make verelaies and laies,
 And some to other diverse plaies.
 And I to me a romance tooke,

¹ Live. 7.
 arated.

² Harm (Fr. *nuisance*, Lat. *nocere*).

³ None sep

And as I reading was the booke,
 Me thoughte the sphere hadde so runne,
 That it was rising of the sunne, 980
 And such a prees¹ into the plaine
 Assemble gone, that with great paine
 One mighte for other go ne stande,
 Ne none take other by the hande,
 Withouten they distourbed were,
 So huge and great the prees was there.

And after that within two houres,
 This mighty lord, all in floures
 Of divers colours many a paire,
 In his estate up in the aire, 990
 Well two fathom, as his hight,
 He set him there in all their sight,
 And for the queene and for the knight,
 And for my lady, and every wight
 In hast he sente, so that never one
 Was there absent, but come echone.

And when they thus assembled were,
 As ye have heard me say you here,
 Withoute more tarrying, on hight,
 There to be seene of every wight, 1000
 Up stood among the prees above
 A counsayler, servaunt of Love,
 Which seemed well of great estate,
 And shewede there how no debate
 Owe,² ne goodly³ mighte be used
 In gentilnesse,⁴ and be excused.

¹ Crowd. ² Ought. ³ Properly. ⁴ Good breeding.

Wherefore, he said, his lordes wille
 Was every wight there shoulde be stille,
 And in pees, and one accord.
 And thus commaunded at a word, 1010
 And can his tongue to swiche language
 Turne, that yet in all mine age
 Heard I never so conningly ¹
 Man speake, ne halfe so faithfully ;
 For every thing he saide there
 Seemed as it insealed ² were,
 Or approved for very trewe.
 Swiche was his cunning language newe,
 And well according to his chere,
 That where I be, me thinke I here 1020
 Him yet alway, when I mine one ³
 In any place may be alone.

First con he of the lusty yle
 Alle thastate in little while
 Rehearse, and wholly every thing
 That causede there his lords comming,
 And every wele and every wo,
 And for what cause ech thing was so,
 Well shewed he there in easie speech,
 And how the sicke hadde need of leech : 1030
 And that whole was, and in grace,
 He tolde plainly why each thing was.
 And at the last he con conclude,
 Voided every language rude,
 And saide, " That prince, that mighty lord,

¹ Wisely. ² Had the force of a sealed document. ³ Myself

Or his departing, would accord¹
 Alle the parties there present,
 And was the fine of his entent,
 Witnesse his presence in your sight,
 Which sit among you in his might." 1040
 And kneelede downe withouten more,
 And not o word ne spake he more.

Tho gan this mighty lord him dresse,
 With cheare avised, to do largesse,
 And said unto this knight and me,
 "Ye shall to joy restored be,
 And for ye have ben true, ye twaine,
 I graunt you here for every paine
 A thousand joies every weeke,
 And looke ye be no lenger seeke. 1050
 And both your ladies, lo, hem here
 Take ech his own, beeth of good chere!
 Your happie day² is new begunne,
 Sith it was rising of the sunne.
 And to all other in this place
 I graunt wholly to stand in grace,
 That serveth truely, withoute slouth,
 And to avaunced be by trouth."

Tho can³ this knight and I downe kneele,
 Wening to doe wonder wele, 1060
 Seying, "O Lord, your greate mercy
 Us hath enriched so openly,
 That we deserve may never more
 The leaste part, but evermore

¹ Bring to agreement. ² Happiness (Fr *bonheur*). ³ Can

With soule and body truely serve
 You and youres till we sterve."
 And to their ladies there they stoode,
 This knight, that couthe so mikel goode,
 Went in hast, and I also.
 Joyous and glad were we tho, 1078
 And also rich in every thought,
 As he that all hath and ought ¹ nought;
 And hem besought in humble wise
 Us taccepte to their service,
 And shew us of their friendly cheares,
 Which in their treasure many yeares
 They hadde kept, us to great paine;
 And tolde how their servants twaine
 Were and woulde be, and so had ever,
 And to the death chaunge woulde we never,
 Ne doe offence, ne thinke like ille, 1081
 But fill ² their ordinance and wille.
 And made our othes freshe newe,
 Our olde service to renewe,
 And wholly theirs for evermore
 We there become, what mighte we more?
 And well awaiting ³ that in slouth
 We made ne fault, ne in our trouth,
 Ne thoughte not do, I you ensure,
 With our wille, where we may dure. 1090
 This season past, againe an eve,
 This lord of the queene tooke leve;
 And said he would hastely returne,

¹ Oweth. ² Fulfill. ³ Watching.

And at good leisure there sojourne,
Both for his honour and for his ease,
Commaunding fast the knight to please,
And gave his statutes in papers,
And ordent¹ divers officers.

And forth to ship the same night
He went, and soone was out of sight, 1100

And on the morrow, when the aire
Attempred was and wonder faire,
Early at rising of the sunne,
After the night away was runne,
Playing us on the rivage,²

My lady spake of her voyage,
And saide she made smalle journies,
And held her in straunge countries.

And forthwith to the queene wente,
And shewed her wholly her entente, 1110

And tooke her leave with cheare weeping,

That pittie was to see that parting:

For to the queene it was a paine,

As to a martyr new yslaine,

That for her woe, and she so tender,

Yet weepe I oft when I remember.

She offerde there to resigne

To my lady, eight times or nine,

Thastate, the yle, shortly to telle,

If mighte it please her there to dwelle; 1120

And saide for ever her linage

Shoulde to my lady doe homage,

¹ Ordained. ² Shore (Fr *rivage*).

And hers be hole withouten more,
Ye, and all theirs for evermore.

“Nay, God forbid,” my lady ofte,
With many conning word and softe,
Saide, “that ever such thing shoulde beene,
That I consente shoulde, that a queene
Of your estate, and so well named,
In any wise shoulde be attamed ;¹ 1130
But woulde be faine with all my herte,
What so befell, or how me smerte,
To doe thing that you mighte please,
In any wise, or be your ease : ”
And kissede there, and bad good night,
For which leve wepte many a wight.

There mighte men here my lady praised,
And such a name of her araised,
What of cunning and friendlinesse,
What of beauty with gentilnesse, 1140
What of glad and friendly cheares,
That she used in all her yeares,
That wonder was here² every wight,
To say well how they did their might.
And with a prees, upon the morrow,
To ship her brought, and what a sorrow
They made, when she should under saile,
That, ye wist, ye woulde mervaile.

Forth goeth the ship, out goeth the sonde,³
And I as a wood man unbonde,⁴ 1150

¹ Disgraced (Fr. *entamer*, to cut in). ² To hear. ³ Lead (Fr. *sonde*, fathom lead). ⁴ Escaped madman.

For doubt¹ to be behinde there,
 Into the sea withouten fere
 Anon I ran, till with a wawe,²
 All sodenly, I was overthrawe ;
 And with the water to and fro,
 Backward and forward travailed so,
 That mind and breath nigh was gone
 For good ne harme knew I none ;
 Til at the last with hookes tweine,
 Men of the ship with mikel peine,
 To save my life, dide such travaile,
 That, and ye wist, ye woulde mervaille,
 And in the ship me drew on hie,³
 And saiden alle that I woulde die,
 And laide me long downe by the maste,
 And of their clothes on me caste,
 And there I made my testamente,
 And wiste my selfe not what I mente.
 But whan I said had what I woulde,
 And to the mast my wo all tolde,
 And tane my leave of every wight,
 And closed mine eyen, and lost my sight,
 Avised to die, without more speeche,
 Or any remedy to seeche
 Of grace new, as was great need
 My lady of my paine tooke heed,
 And her bethought how that for trouth
 To see me die it were great routh.
 And to me came in sober wise,

1160

1170

¹ Fear. ² Wawe ³ In haste.

And softly said, " I pray you rise ! 1180
 Come on with me, let be this fare,¹
 All shall be wel, have ye no care !
 I will obey, ye, and fulfille,
 Holy in all that lordes wille,
 That you and me not long ago
 After his list commaundede so,
 That there againe no resistance
 May be withoute great offence.
 And, therefore, now loke what I say,
 I am and will be friendly aye. 1190
 Rise up, behold this avauntage,
 I graunte you inheritage,
 Peaceably withoute strive,
 During the daies of your live."

And of her apples in my sleve
 One she put, and tooke her leve
 In wordes few and saide, " Good hele,²
 He that all made, you send, and wele ! " ³
 Wherewith my paines, all at ones,
 Tooke such leave, that all my bones, 1200
 For the newe durence ⁴ pleasaunce,
 So as they couthe, desirede to daunce.
 And I as whole as any wight
 Up rose, with joyous heart and light,
 Hole and unsicke, right wele at ease,
 And all forget hadde my disease,
 And to my lady, where she plaide,

¹ Ado. ² Health. ³ Well-being. ⁴ This word seems to mean
 constrained, though it has been said to be derived from the French
duracine, a kind of peach

I went anone, and to her saide :

“ He that all joies persons to please

First ordainede with parfite ease, 1210

And every pleasure can departe,¹

Send you, madame, as large a parte,

And of his goodes such plenty,

As he hath done you of beauty,

With hele and all that may be thought,

He send you all, as he all wrought !

“ Madame,” quoth I, “ your servaunt trewe

Have I ben long, and yet will newe,

Withoute chaunge or repentaunce,

In any wise or variaunce, 1220

And so will do, as thrive I ever,

For thing is none that me is lever

Than you to please, how ever I fare !

Mine hartes lady and my welfare,

My life, mine hele, my lech also,

Of every thing that doth me wo,

My helpe at need, and my surete

Of every joy that longeth to me,

My succours whole in alle wise,

That may be thought, or man devise ! 1230

Your grace, madame, such have I founde,

Now in my need that I am bounde

To you for ever, so Christ me save !

For heale and live² of you I have ;

Wherefore is reasoun I you serve,

With due obeisaunce till I sterve,

¹ Distribute. ² Health and life

And dead and quicke¹ be ever youres,
Late, early, and at all houres."

Tho came my lady small alite,²
And in plaine English con consite.³ 1240
In wordes few whole her entente
She shewede me there, and how she mente
To me-wardes in every wise,
Wholly she came at their devise,
Withoute processe⁴ or long travell,
Charging me to keepe counsell,
As I woulde to her grace attaine,
Of which commaundement I was faine.
Wherefore I passe over at this time,
For counsell cordeth⁵ not well in rime ; 1250
And eke the oth that I have swore,
To breake, me were better unbore.
Why? For untrue for evermore
I shoulde be holde, that nevermore
Of me in place shoulde be reporte
Thing that availe might, or comforte
To mewardes in any wise,
And ech wight woulde me dispise
In that they couth, and me reprove,⁶
Which were a thing sore for to greeve, 1260
Wherefore hereof more mencion
Make I not now, ne long sermon,
But shortly thus I me excuse ;
To rime a counsell I refuse.

¹ Alive. ² A little while. ³ Began to recite. ⁴ Argument
⁵ Accordeth. ⁶ Reprove.

Sailing thus two daies or three,
 My lady towards her countree,
 Over the waves high and greene,
 Which were large and deepe betweene,
 Upon a time me called, and saide
 That of hele she was well paid,¹ 1270
 And of the queene and of the yle.

She talkede with me longe while,
 Of all that she there hadde seene,
 And of the state, and of the queene,
 And of the ladies, name by name,
 Two houres or mo, this was her game.
 Till at the last the wind can rise,
 And blew so fast, and in such wise,
 The ship that every wight can saye,
 "Madame, er eve be of this daye, 1280
 And God tofore, ye shall be there
 As ye woulde fainest² that ye were,
 And doubte not within sixe hours,
 Ye shall be there as all³ is yours."

At which wordes she gan to smile,
 And saide that was no long while,
 That they her set, and up she rose,
 And all about the ship she gose,
 And made good cheare to every wight,
 Till of the land she had a sight; 1290
 Of which sight glad, God it wot,
 She was abashed and about;⁴
 And forth goeth, shortly you to telle,

¹ Satisfied. ² Most gladly. ³ Where all. ⁴ Depressed.

Where she accustomed was to dwelle;
 And received was, as good right,
 With joyous cheere and heartes light,
 And as a glad new aventure,
 Pleasaunt to every creature.

With which landing tho I woke,
 And found my chamber full of smoke, 1300
 My cheekes eke unto the eares,
 And all my body wet with teares.
 And all so feeble and in such wise
 I was, that unneth¹ might I rise,
 So fare travailed and so faint,
 That neither knew I kirke ne saint,²
 Ne what was what, ne who was who,
 Ne avised what way I woulde go;
 But by a venturous grace,
 I rose and walkte, soughte pace and pace, 1310
 Till I a winding staire found,
 And held the vice³ aye in my hond,
 And upward softly so can creepe,
 Till I came where I thoughte to sleepe
 More at mine ease, and out of preace,⁴
 At my good leisure, and in peace,
 Till somewhat I recomfort were
 Of the travell and greate feare
 That I endured hadde before.
 This was my thought withoute more, 1320
 And as a wight witlesse and faint,
 Withoute more, in a chamber paint⁵

¹ Scarcely.
 Painted.

² I was a perfect stranger.

³ Newel.

⁴ Crowd

Full of stories old and divers,
 More than I can now rehearse,
 Unto a bed full soberly,
 So as I mighte full softly,
 Pace after other, and nothing saide ;
 Till at the last downe I me laide,
 And as my mind woulde give me leve,
 All that I dreamed hadde that eve 1330
 Beforen all I can rehearse,
 Right as a child at schoole his verse,
 Doth after ¹ that he thinketh to thrive,
 Right so did I ; for all my live
 I thoughte to have in remembraunce,
 Bothe the paine and the pleasaunce,
 The dreame whole, as it me befell,
 Which was as ye here me telle.

Thus in my thoughtes as I lay,
 That happy or unhappy day, — 1340
 Ne wot I not, so have I blame,
 Of thilke two which is the name, —
 Befell me so, that there a thoughte
 By processe new on sleepe me brougte,
 And me governede so in a while,
 That yet againe within the yle
 Methought I was, whereof the knight
 And of the ladies I had a sight ;
 And were assembled on a greene,
 Knight and lady with the queene. 1350
At which assembly there was said,

¹ Accordingly as.

How they alle content and paid ¹
 Were wholly as in that thing,
 That the knight there shoulde be king,
 And they would all for sure witesse
 Wedded be bothe more and lesse,²
 In remembraunce withoute more,
 Thus they consente for evermore.
 And was concluded that the knight
 Departe shoulde the same night ; 1364
 And forthwith there tooke his voiage
 To journey for his marriage,
 And returne with such an hoste,
 That wedded mighte be least and moste.
 This was concluded, written and sealed,
 That it mighte not be repealed
 In no wise, but aie be firme,
 And should all be within a tearme,
 Withoute more excusation,
 Both feast and coronation. 1370

This knight which hadde thereof the charge
 Anon into a little barge
 Brought was late against an eve,
 Where of all he tooke his leave ;
 Which barge was as a mannes thought,
 After his pleasure to him brought,
 The queene herselfe accustomed aye
 In thilke same barge to playe.
 It needeth neither mast ne rother,³ —
 I have not heard of such another, — 1384

¹ Satisfied. ² Great and small ³ Rudder

Ne maister for the governaunce ;
 Hit sayled by thought and pleasaunce,
 Withoute labour, east and west,
 Alle was one, calme or tempest.
 And I wente with, at his request,
 And was the first praied¹ to the fest.

Whan he came in-to his countree,
 And passed hadde the wavy see,
 In an haven deepe and large
 He left his rich and noble barge, 1390
 And to the court, shortly to telle,
 He wente, where he wont was to dwelle,
 And was received as good right,
 As heire, and for a worthy knight,
 With alle the states² of the lond,
 Which came anon at his firste sond,³
 With glade spirits full of trouth,
 Loth to do fault, or with a slouth
 Attainte be in any wise.

Their riches was their olde servise, 1400
 Which ever trew hadde be fonde,
 Sith first inhabit was the londe.

And so received they their king,
 That forgotten was no thing,
 That owe to be done ne mighte please,
 Ne their souveraine lord to ease.
 And with hem, so shortly to saye,
 As they of custome hadde done aye,
 For seven yere past was and more,

¹ Asked. ² Representatives of the states. ³ Message.

The father, the olde wise and hore 1410
 King of the land, tooke his leve
 Of all his barons on an eve,
 And told hem how his dayes past
 Were all, and comen was the last ;
 And hartily prayed hem to remember
 His sonne, which yong was and tender,
 That borne was their prince to be,
 If he returne to that countree
 Mighte, by adventure ¹ or grace,
 Within any time or space ; 1420
 And to be true and friendly aye,
 As they to him hadde bene alway :
 Thus he hem prayde, withoute more,
 And tooke his leave for evermore.

Knowen was, how tender in age
 This younge prince a great viage
 Uncouth and straunge, honours to seche,²
 Tooke in honde with little speeche ,
 Which was to seeke a princesse
 That he desirede more than richesse, 1430
 For her greate name that floured³ so,
 That in that time there was no mo
 Of her estate, ne so well named,
 For borne was none that ever her blamed
 Of which princes somewhat before
 Here have I spoke, and some will more.

So thus befell as ye shall heare.
 Unto their lord they made such cheare,

¹ Chance. ² Seek. ³ Flourished.

That joy was there to be present
 To see their troth and how they mente, 1440
 So very glad they were ech one,
 That hem among there was no one,
 That desirede more richesse,
 Than for their lord such a princesse,
 That they mighte please, and that were faire,
 For fast desirede they an heire,
 And saide great surety were, ywis.

And as they were speaking of this,
 The prince himselfe him avised,
 And in plaine English undisguised 1450
 Hem shewed hole his journeye,
 And of their counsell gan hem preye,
 And told how he ensured was,
 And how his day he mighte not passe,
 Without diffame and greate blame,
 And to him for ever a shame ;
 And of their counsell and advise
 There he prayth hem once or twice,
 And that they woulde, within ten daies,
 Advise and ordaine him such waies 1460
 So that it were no displeasaunce,
 Ne to this realme over great grievance ;
 And that he have mighte to his feast
 Sixty thousand at the least ;
 For his intent within short while
 Was to returne unto his yle
 That he came fro, and kepe his day,
 For nothing would he be away.

To counsaile tho the lords anon
Into a chamber, everychone, 1470
Togither went, hem to devise
How they mighte best, and in what wise,
Purveye for their lords pleasaunce
And the realmes continuaunce
Of honor, which in it before
Hadde continued evermore.
So, at the last, they founde the waies,
How within the nexte ten daies
All mighte with paine and diligence
Be done ; and cast what the dispence 1480
Mighte draw, and in conclusion,
Made for ech thing provision.

Whan this was done, wholly tofore
The prince, the lordes all before
Come, and shewed what they hadde done,
And how they couthe by no reason
Finde that within the ten daies
He mighte departe by no waies,
But woulde be fifteene, at the least,
Or he returne mighte to his feast ; 1490
And shewed him every reason why
It mighte not be so hastily
As he desirede, ne his day
He mighte not keepe by no way,
For divers causes wonder greate.

Which, whan he heard, in such an heate
He fell for sorow and was seke,
Still in his bedde whole that weke,

And nigh the tother for the shame,
 And for the doubt, and for the blame 1500
 That on him mighte be aret,¹
 And oft upon his brest he bet,
 And said, “Alas, mine honour for aye
 Have I here lost cleane this day!
 Dead would I be! alas, my name
 Shall aye be more henceforth in shame,
 And I dishonoured and reprevd,²
 And never more shall be beleevd!”
 And made swich sorow, that in trouth,
 Him to behold it was great routh. 1510
 And so endured the dayes fiftene,
 Till that the lordes on an even
 Him come, and tolde they ready were,
 And shewed in few wordes there,
 How and what wise they hadde purveyd
 For his estate, and to him said,
 That twenty thousand knights of name,
 And forty thousand without blame,
 All come of noble ligne,³
 Togider in a compagne, 1520
 Were lodged on a rivers side,
 Him and his pleasure there tabide.

‘The prince tho for joy up rose,
 And where they lodged were he goes
 Withoute more that same nighte,
 And these his supper made to dighte,⁴
 And with hem bode till it was dey.

¹ Imputed ² Reproved ³ Line. ⁴ Prepare

And forthwith to take his journey,
 Leving the streight,¹ holding the large,²
 Till he came to his noble barge. 1530
 And when this prince, this lustie knight,
 With his people in armes brighte,
 Was comen where he thought to pase,
 And knew well none abiding was
 Behind, but all were there present,
 Forthwith anon all his intent
 He told hem there, and made his cries ³
 Through his oste that day twies,
 Commaunding every lives wight,⁴
 There being present in his sight, 1540
 To be the morow on the rivage,⁵
 Where he beginne would his viage.

The morrow come, the cry was kept,
 Fewe was there that night that slept,
 But trussed and purveied for the morrow;
 For fault ⁶ of ships was all their sorrow,
 For save the barge, and other two,
 Of shippes there saw I no mo.
 Thus in their doubtes as they stooode,
 Waxing the sea, comming the floode,⁷ 1550
 Was cried, "To ship goe every wighte!"
 Then was but hie,⁸ that hie mighte,
 And to the barge me thought echone
 They wente. Without was left not one,
 Horse, male,⁹ trusse, ne bagage,

Narrow. ² Broad. ³ Proclamations. ⁴ Live person. ⁵ Short
 Default. ⁷ Rising tide. ⁸ Hasten. ⁹ Budget.

Salad,¹ speare, gard-brace,² ne page,
But was lodged and roome ynough.

At which shipping me thought I lough,³
And gan to marvaile in my thought,
How ever such a ship was wrought, 1560
For what people that can encrease,
Ne never so thicke mighte be the prease,
But all hadde roome at their wille,
There was not one was lodged ille,
For as I trow, my selfe the last
Was one, and lodged by the mast,
And where I looked I saw such roime,
As all were lodged in a towne.

Forth goth the ship, said was the creed,
And on their knees for their good speed 1570
Downe kneeled every wight a while,
And praiede faste that to the yle
They mighte come in safety,
The prince and all the company,
With worship and withoute blame,
Or disclaunder⁴ of his name,
Of the promise he shoulde retourne,
Within the time he dide sojourne,
In his londe biding his host ;
This was their prayer of least and most. 1580

To keepe the day it mighte not been,
That he appointed hadde with the queen
To returne withoute slouth,

¹ Sallet, helmet. ² Arm armor (Fr. *garde*, guard, *bras*, arm)
Laughed ⁴ Dishonor.

And so assured had his trouth.
 For whiche fault this prince, this knight,
 During the time slepte not a night,
 Such was his wo and his disease,¹
 For doubt ² he shoulde the queene displease.

Forth goeth the ship with suche speed,
 Right as the prince for his great need 1590
 Desire would after his thoughte,
 Till it into the yle him broughte ;
 Where in hast upon the sand
 He and his people tooke the land,
 With hartes glad, and chere light,
 Weening to be in heaven that night.
 But or ³ they passeden a while,
 Entiring in toward that yle,
 All clad in blacke with chere piteous,
 A lady which never dispiteous 1600
 Hadde be in all her life tofore,
 With sory chere, and harte to-tore,
 Unto this prince where he gan ride,
 Come and said, " Abide, abide !
 And have no hast, but fast retourne !
 No reason is ye here sojourne,
 For your untruth hath us discried ! ⁴
 Wo worth ⁵ the time we us alliede
 With you, that are so soone untrewel
 Alas, the day that we you knewe ! 1610
 Alas, the time that ye were bore,
 For all this lond by you is lore !

¹ Discomfort. ² Fear. ³ Ere. ⁴ Destroyed. ⁵ Unhappy be.

Accursed be he you hider broughte,
For all your joy is turned to nought;
Your acquaintance we may complaine,
Which is the cause of all our paine.”

“Alas, madame,” quoth tho this knight,
And with that from his horse he light,
With colour pale and cheekes lene,

“Alas, what is this for to mene? 1620

What have ye said, why be ye wroth?
You to displease I woulde be loth.

Know ye not well the promesse
I made have to your princesse,
Which to perfourme is mine intent,
So mote I speed, as I have ment.

And as I am her very trewe,¹
Withoute change or thoughtes newe,

And also fully her servand,²
As creature or man livand³ 1630

May be to lady or princesse,
For she mine heaven and whole richesse

Is, and the lady of mine heale,
My worldes joy and all my weale!

What may this be, whence cometh this speech?

Tell me, madame, I you beseech;

For sith the first of my living

Was I so fearfull of nothing

As I am now to heare you speake;

For doubt I feele mine hearte breake. 1640

Say on, madame, tell me your wille,

“The remenaunt is it good or ille?”

¹ Her very true one. ² Serving. ³ Living.

“Alas,” quod she, “that ye were boie,
For, for your love this land is lore !
The queene is dead, and that is ruth,
For sorrow of your great untruth ;
Of two partes of the lusty route
Of ladies that were there aboute,
That wont were to talke and play,
Now aren dead and cleane away, 1650
And under earth tane lodging newe ;
Alas, that ever ye were untrewe !
For when the time ye set was past,
The queene toke counsaile sone in hast,
What was to doe, and said great blame
Your acquaintaunce cause would and shame ;
And the ladies of their avise
Prayed, for need was to be wise
In eschewing tales and songs,
That by hem make would ille tonges, 1660
And sey they were lightly conquest,
And prayed to a poore feast,
And foule had their worship weived,
When so unwisely they conceived
Their rich treasour, and their heale,
Their famous name, and their weale,
To put in such an aventure,
Of which the sclander ever dure
Was like, withoute helpe of appele.
Wherefore they need had of counsele, 1670
For every wight of hem would say
Their closed yle an open way

Was become to every wight,
 And wel apprevd by a knight,
 Which he, alas, without paysaunce,¹
 Hadde soone acheved thobeisaunce.
 All this was moved at counsell thrise,
 And concluded daily twise,
 That bet was die withoute blame
 Than lose the riches of their name. 1680
 Wherefore, the deathes acquaintaunce
 They chese, and left have their pleasaunce,
 For doubt to live as repreved,²
 In that they you so soone beleeved ;
 And made their othes with one accord,
 That eate ne drinke, ne speake word,
 They shoulde never, but ever weping
 Bide in a place withoute parting,
 And use their dayes in penaunce,
 Without desire of allegeaunce. 1690
 Of which the truth, anon, con preve,³
 For-why? The queen forthwith her leve
 Toke at hem all that were present,
 Of her defaults fully repent,
 And diede there withouten more :
 Thus are we lost for evermore.

"What should I more hereof rehearse?
 Comen within, come see her herse,
 Where ye shall see the piteous sight,
 That ever yet was shewen to knight. 1700
 For ye shall see ladies stonde,

Pausing. ² Fear to live under the reproof. ³ Gan to prove.

Ech with a great rod in their honde,
 I-clad in black, with visage white,
 Ready each other for to smite,
 If any be that will not wepe,
 Or who that maketh countenance to slepe ;
 They be so bet, that all-so blewe
 They be as cloth that died is newe,¹
 Such is their parfite repentance ;
 And thus they kepe their ordinance, 1710
 And will do ever to the death,
 While hem endureth any breath."

This knight tho in armes twaine
 This lady tooke and gan her saine,
 "Alas, my birth ! wo worth my life !"
 And even with that he drew a knife,
 And through gowne, doublet, and sherte,
 He made the blood come from his herte,
 And set him downe upon the greene,
 And, full repent, closed his eene,² 1720
 And save that ones he drew his breath,
 Without more thus he tooke his death.
 For which cause the lusty hoast,
 Which in a battaile on the coast,
 At once for sorrow such a cry
 Gan rere thorow the company,
 That to the heaven heard was the sowne,
 And under therth als fer adowne,
 That wilde beastes for the feare

¹ They were beaten until they were blue. ² Fully repentant, closed his eyes.

So sodainly afrayed were, 1730
 That for the doubt, while they mighte dure,
 They ran as of their lives unsure,
 From the woodes unto the plaine,
 And from the valleys the highe mountaine
 They sought, and ran as beastes blinde,
 That cleane forgotten had their kinde.¹

This wo not ceased, to counsaile wente
 These lords, and for that lady sente,
 And of avise what was to done,
 They her besoughte she say woulde sone. 1740

Weeping full sore, all clad in blake,
 This lady softly to hem spake,
 And saide, " My lordes, by my trouth,
 This mischiefe it is of your slouth,
 And if ye hadde that judge woulde right,
 A prince that were a very knight,
 Ye that ben of astate, echone,
 Die for his fault should, one and one ;
 And if he hold hadde the promesse,
 And done that longeth ² to gentilnesse, 1750
 And fulfilled the princes behest,
 This hastie farme ³ hadde bene a feast,
 And now is unrecoverable,
 And us a slaunder aye durable.
 Wherefore, I say, as of counsaile,
 In me is none that may availe ;
 But, if ye list, for remembraunce

¹ Nature. ² Belongeth. ³ Supper. This is also read *any*
some, sudden grief (O. E. *earn*, Ger. *arm*, miserable).

Purvey and make such ordinaunce,
 That the queene, that was so meke,
 With all her women, dede or seke, 1760
 Might in your land a chappell have,
 With some remembraunce of her grave,
 Shewing her end with the pity,
 In some notable olde city,
 Nigh unto a high way,
 Where every wight mighte for her pray,
 And for all hers that have ben trewe."
 And even with that she changed hewe,
 And twise wished after the death,
 And sight,¹ and thus passed her breath. 1770

Then saide the lordes of the hoste,
 And so conclude least and moste,
 That they would ever in houses of thacke ²
 Their lives lead, and weare but blacke,
 And forsake all their pleasaunces,
 And turn all joy to penaunces,
 And beare the deade prince to the barge,
 And named hem should have the charge.
 And to the hearse where lay the queen
 The remenaunt went, and down on kneen, 1780
 Holding their hondes on high, con ³ crie,
 "Mercy, mercy!" everich thrie;⁴
 And cursede the time that ever slouth
 Should have such masterdome of trouth.
 And to the barge a long mile,
 They bare her forth; and in a while

¹ Sighed. ² Thatch. ³ Gan. ⁴ Each thrice.

Alle the ladies, one and one,
 By companies were brought echone,
 And past the sea and tooke the land,
 And in new herses on a sand 1790
 I-put and brought were all anon,
 Unto a city closed with stone,
 Where it hadde been used aye
 The kinges of the land to lay,
 After they raigned in honours,
 And writ was which were conquerours,
 In an abbey of nunnes which were blake,
 Which accustomed were to wake,¹
 And of usage rise ech a night
 To pray for every lives wight. 1800
 And so befell as in the guise,
 Ordeint and said was the servise
 Of thilke prince and of the queen,
 So devoutly as mighte been,
 And after that about the herses,
 Many orisones and verses,
 Withoute note, full softly,
 Said were and that full heartily,
 That all the night till it was day,
 The people in the church con pray 1810
 Unto the holy Trinitie,
 Of these soules to have pitie.

And when the night ipast and ronne
 Was, and the newe day begonne,
 The yonge morrow with rayes rede,

¹ Watch, keep vigils.

Which from the sunne over all con sprede,
 Atempered clere was and faire,
 And made a time of wholsome aire,
 Befell a wonder case and strange
 Among the people, and gan change 1820
 Soone the word and every woo
 Unto a joy, and some to two.

A bird, all fedred blew and greene,
 With brighte rayes like gold betweene,
 As smalle thred over every joynt,
 All full of colour strange and coint,¹
 Uncouth² and wonderfull to sighte,
 Upon the queenes herse con lighte,
 And song full low and softly,
 Three songes in her harmony, 1830
 Unletted of every wight.

Till, at the last, an aged knight
 Which seemed a man in great thought
 Like as he set all thing at nought,
 With visage and eien all forwept
 And pale, as man longe unslept,
 By thilke herses as he stood,
 With hasty hondling of his hood
 Unto a prince that by him paste
 Made the bridde somewhat agast. 1840
 Wherefore she rose and left her song,
 And departe from us among,
 And spread her winges for to passe
 By the place he entred was ;

¹ Quant. ² Strange (l't. unknown).

And in his hast, shortly to telle,
 Him hurt, that backward downe he fell
 From a window richly ipeint
 With lives of many divers seint,
 And bet his wings and bledde faste,
 And of the hurt thus died and paste ; 1850
 And lay there well an houre and more
 Till, at the last, of briddes a score
 Come and sembled at the place
 Where the window ibroken was,
 And made swiche waimentacioun,²
 That pity was to heare the soun,
 And the warbles of their throtes,
 And the complaint of their notes,
 Which from joy cleane was reversed.
 And of hem one the glas soone persed, 1860
 And in his beke of colours nine
 An herbe he broughte floureslesse, all greene,
 Ful of smalle leaves and plaine,
 Swart³ and longe with many a vaine,
 And where his fellow lay thus dede,
 This hearbe down laide by his hede,
 And dressed it ful softly,
 And hong his head and stood thereby.
 Which hearb, in lesse than halfe an houre,
 Gan over all knit, and after floure 1870
 Full out and wexe ripe the seede.
 And right as one another feede
 Would, in his beake ne tooke the graine,

¹ Assembled. ² Lamentation. ³ Dark.

And in his fellowes beake certaine
 It put, and thus, within the third,
 Up stood and pruned¹ him the bird,
 Which dead hadde be in all our sight,
 And both together forth their flight
 Tooke singing from us, and their leve ;
 Was none disturb hem woulde ne greve.² 1880

And when they parted were and gone
 Thabbesse the seedes soone echone
 I-gadred had, and in her hand
 The herb she tooke, well avisand³
 The leafe, the seed, the stalke, the floure ;
 And said it had a good savour,
 And was no common herb to finde,
 And well approved of uncouth kinde,
 And than other more vertuose,
 Who so have it mighte for to use 1890
 In his neede, flowre, leafe, or graine,
 Of their heale⁴ mighte be certaine ;
 And laid it downe upon the herse
 Where lay the queene, and gan reherse
 Echone to other that they hadde seene.
 And taling⁵ thus the sede wex greene,
 And on the drie herse gan springe,
 Which thoughte me a wondrous thinge.
 And after that floure and newe seed,⁶
 Of which the people all tooke heed, 1900
 And said, it was some great miracle,

¹ Trimmed his feathers. ² This story is as old as the Grecian
 fabulous history. ³ Observing. ⁴ Cure. ⁵ Recounting. ⁶ Began
 to flower new and produce seed.

Or medicine fine more than triacle ;¹
 And were well done there to assay,
 If it might ease in any way
 The corses, which with torche light,
 They waked hadde there all that night.

Soone dide the lordes there consente,
 And all the people thereto contente,
 With easie wordes and little fare,²
 And made the queenes visage bare, 1910
 Which shewed was to all about ;
 Wherefore in swoone fell whole the rout,
 And were so sory, most and leaste,
 That long of weeping they not ceaste,
 For of their lord the remembraunce
 Unto hem was such displeasaunce,
 That for to live they called a paine,
 So were they very true and plaine.

And after this, the good abbesse
 Of the graines gan chese and drese 1920
 Three, with her fingers cleane and smalle,
 And in the queenes mouth, by tale,³
 One after other full easily
 She putte and full conningly,
 Which shewede soone such vertue,
 That preved was the medicine true.
 Nor with a smiling countenaunce
 The queene uprose, and of usaunce,⁴
 As she was wont, to every wight
 She made good cheere ; for which sight 1930

¹ Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l 4901. ² Ado. ³ Count. ⁴ As usual.

The people, kneeling on the stones,
 Thoughte they in heaven were, soule and
 bones.

And to the prince, where he lay,
 They wente to make the same assay.
 And whan the queene it understood,
 And how the medicine was good,
 She prayede she might have the graines
 To releve him from the paines
 Which she and he hadde both endured,
 And to him went, and so him curede, 1940
 That within a little space
 Lusty and fresh on live he was,
 And in good hele and hole of speech,
 And lough, and said, "Gramercy, leech!"
 For which the joy throughout the town
 So great was that the belles sown
 Afraid the people, a journey¹
 About the city every way,
 And come and askede cause and why
 They rongen were so stately. 1950

And after that the queene, thabbesse
 Made diligence, or they woulde cesse.
 Such, that of ladies soone a rout
 Sewing² the queene was all about;
 And, called by name echone and tolde,³
 Was none forgotten, young ne olde.
 There mighte men see joyes newe,
 When the medicine fine and trewe

¹ A day's journey. ² Following. ³ Counted.

Thus restored had every wight,
So well the queene as the knight, 1960
Unto perfit joy and hele,
That fleting they were in such wele
As folke that would in no wise
Desire more perfit paradise.

And thus, whan passed was the sorrow,
With mikel joy soone on the morrow,
The king, the queene, and every lord,
With all the ladies by one accord,
A generall assembly
Gert¹ cry through the country, 1970
The which after, as here intent,
Was turned to a parliament,
Where was ordained and avised
Every thing and devised
That please mighte to most and leaste.
And there concluded² was the feaste,
Within the yle to be yholde
With full consent of young and olde,
In the same wise as before,
As thing shoulde be withouten more. 1980

And shipped and thither wente,
And into straunge realmes sente
To kinges, queenes, and duchesses,
To divers princes and princesses,
Of their lineage, and can³ pray
That it mighte like⁴ hem at that day
Of marriage, for their sport,

¹ Caused. ² Determined. ³ Did (gan). ⁴ Please.

Come see the yle and hem disport,
 Where shoulde be jousts and turnaies,
 And armes done in other waies, 1990
 Signifying over all the day,
 After Aprille within May.

And was avised that ladies tweine,
 Of good estate and well beseine,¹
 With certaine knightes and squiers,
 And of the queenes officers,
 In manner of an embassade,
 With certain letters closed and made,
 Shoulde take the barge and departe,
 And seeke my lady every parte, 2000
 Till they her founde, for² any thing,
 Both charged have queene and king.
 And as their lady and maistresse,
 Her to beseke of gentilnesse
 At thilke day there for to been.
 And oft her³ recommaund the queen,
 And prayeth, for all loves, to haste,
 For, but she come, all woll be waste,
 And the feast a businesse
 Withoute joy or lustinesse ; 2010
 And tooke hem tokens⁴ and good speed
 Praide God send, after their need.

Forth wente the ladies and the knights,
 And were out fourteene daies and nights,
 And broughte my lady in their barge,
 And had well sped and done their charge.

¹ Arrayed. ² Despite. ³ To her. ⁴ Credentials.

Whereof the queene so hartily glade
 Was, that, in soth, such joy she hadde
 When thilke ship approched lond,
 That she my lady on the sond ¹ 2020
 I-met, and in armes so constraine,²
 That wonder was behold hem twaine ;
 Which to my dome during twelve houres,
 Neither for heat ne watry shoures,
 Departede not no company,³
 Saving hemselfe but none hem by,
 But gave hem leisour at their ease,
 To rehearse joy and disease,
 After the pleasure and courages
 Of their young and tender ages. 2030

And after with many a knight
 I-brought were, where, as for that night,
 They partede not, for to pleasaunce,
 Content was hert and countenaunce
 Both of the queene and my maistresse ;
 This was that night their businesse.

And on the morrow with huge rout,
 This prince, of lordes him about,
 Come and to my lady saide
 That of her comming well apaid 2040
 And glad he was, and full conningly
 Her thanked and full heartily,
 And lough ⁴ and smiled, and said, "Ywis,
 That was in doubt in safety is :"
 And commaundede do diligence,

¹ Sand. ² Embraced ³ Separated ⁴ not. ⁵ Laugh:d

And spare for neither gold ne spence,¹
 But make ready, for on the morow
 Wedded, with Saint John to borrow,²
 He woulde be, withouten more,
 And let hem wite this lesse and more. 2050

The morow come, and the service
 Of mariage in such a wise
 Said was, that with more honour
 Was never prince ne conquerour
 I-wedde, ne with such company
 Of gentilnesse in chivalry,
 Ne of ladies so greate route,
 Ne so beseen,³ as all aboute
 They were there, I certifie
 You on my life withouten lie. 2060

And the feast hold was in tentis,
 As to telle you mihe entent is,
 In a rome, a large plaine
 Under a wood in a champaine,
 Betwixt a river and a welle,
 Where never had abbay ne selle
 Ben, ne kirke, house, ne village,
 In time of any mannes age.
 And durede three monthes the feaste,
 In one estate and never ceaste, 2070
 From early the rising of the sonne,
 Till spent the day was and yronne,
 In justing, dauncing, and lustinesse,
 And all that sownede⁴ to gentilnesse

¹ Expense. ² Cf. *Canterbury Tales*, l. 15,372. ³ Arrayed. ⁴ Brought.

And, as me thoughte, the second morrow,
 When ended was all olde sorrow,
 And in surety every wight
 Hadde with his lady slept a night,
 The prince, the queene, and all the rest
 Unto my lady made request, 2080
 And her besought oft and praied
 To mewards to be well apaied,¹
 And consider mine olde trouth,
 And on my paines have routh,
 And me accept to her servise,
 In such forme and in such wise,
 That we bothe mighte be as one,
 Thus prayede the queene, and everichone.

And, for there shoulde be no nay,
 They stinte justing all a day, 2090
 To pray my lady and requere
 Be content and out of fere,
 And with good hearte make friendly cheare,
 And said it was a happy yeare :
 At which she smiled and said, ywis,

"I trow well he my servaunt is,
 And woulde my welfare, as I triste,²
 So would I his, and would he wiste
 How, and I knewe that his trouth
 Continue woulde withoute slouth, 2100
 And be such as ye here report,
 Restraining both courage and sport,
 I couthe consent, at your request,

Favorable. ² Trust.

To be i-named of your fest,
And do after your usaunce,
In obeying your pleasaunce.
At your request this I consent,
To please you in your entent ;
And eke the Soveraine above
Commanded hath me for to love 2116
And before other him prefer,
Against which prince may be no wer,¹
For his power over all raigneth,
That other woulde for nought him paineth,
And sith his will and yours is one,
Contrary in me shall be none.”
 Tho,² as me thoughte, the promise
Of marriage before the mese³
Desired was of every wight
To be imade the same night, 2120
To put away all maner doute
Of every wight thereabout.
And so was do ; and on the morrow,
When every thought and every sorrow
Dislodged was out of mine herte,
With every wo and every smerte,
Unto a tent prince and princesse,
Me thoughte, broughte me and my maistresse,
And saide we were at full age
There to conclude our marriage ; 2130
With ladies, knightes, and squiers,
And a great host of ministers ;

¹ War. ² Then. ³ Mass

With instruments and sounes diverse,
 That longe were here to rehearse.
 Which tent church perochiall
 Ordaint was in especiall
 For the feast and for the sacre,¹
 Where archbishop and archdiacre²
 Songe full oute the servise,
 After the custome and the guise,
 And the churches ordinaunce.

2140

And after that to dine and daunce
 Brought were we, and to divers plaies,
 And for our speed³ ech with praies,⁴
 And merry was most and leaste,
 And said amended⁵ was the feaste,
 And were right glad, lady and lord,
 Of the marriage and thaccord ;
 And wished us heartes pleasaunce,
 Joy, hele, and continuance.
 And to the ministrils made request,
 That in encreasing of the fest
 They woulde touchen their cords,
 And with some new joyeux accords
 Moove the people to gladnesse ;
 And praiden of all gentilnesse
 Ech to paine⁶ hem for the day,
 To shew his cunning and his play.

2150

Tho beganne sownes mervelous
 Entuned with accords joyous,

2160

¹ Sacrament (of matrimony).
 Prayers. ⁵ Made more pleasant.

² Archdeacon
⁶ Take pains.

³ Success

Round about alle the tentes,
 With thousandes of instrumentes,
 That every wight to daunce hem painede ;
 To be merry was none that fainede.
 Which sowne me troubled in my sleepe,
 That fro my bedde forth I lepe,
 Wening to be at thilke feast.

But when I woke all was ceast,
 For ther nas lady ne creature,
 Save on the walles olde portraiture 217c
 Of horsmen, haukes, and houndes,
 And hurte deere full of woundes,
 Some like bitten, some hurt with shot,
 And, as¹ my dreame, seemed that was not.

And when I wake, and knew the trouth,
 And ye hadde seen, of very routh,
 I trow ye would have wept a weke,
 For never man yet halfe so seke ;
 I went escaped with the life,
 And was for fault that sword ne knife 218c
 I finde me mighte my life tabridge,
 Ne thing that kervede, ne had edge,
 Wherewith I mighte my woful paines
 Have voided with bleeding of my vaines.

Lo, here my blisse, lo, here my paine,
 Which to my lady I do complaine,
 And grace and mercy her requere,
 To ende my wo and busie fere,
 And me accepte to her servise,

¹ As for.

After her service in such avise, 2190
 That of my dreame the substaunce
 Mighte once turne to cognisaunce,
 And cognisaunce to very preve
 By full consent and goode leve
 Or elles without more I pray
 That thilke night, or it be day,
 I mote unto my dreame returne,
 And, sleeping so, forth aie sojourne
 About the yle of pleasaunce,
 Under my ladies obeisaunce 2200
 In her servise, and in such wise
 As it please her may to devise,
 And grace ones to be accepte,
 Like as I dreamed when I slepte,
 And dure a thousand yeare and ten
 In her good will. *Amen ! Amen !*

Fairest of faire, and goodliest on live,
 All my secret to you I plaine and shrive,
 Requiring grace and of complaint,
 To be healed, or martyred as a saint ; 2210
 For by my trouth I sweare, and by this booke,
 Ye may both heale and slea me with a looke.

Go forth, mine owne true hart innocent,
 And with humbiesse do thine observaunce,
 And to thy lady on thy knees present
 Thy servise new, and think how great pleasance

It is to live under thobeisance
 Of her that may with her lookes softe
 Give thee the blisse that thou desirest ofte.

Be diligent, awake, obey, and drede, 2220
 And be not too wild of thy countenaunce,
 But meeke and glad, and thy nature feede,
 To do each thing that may her pleasance,
 When thou shalt sleep, have aie in remembrance
 Thimage of her which may with lookes softe
 Give thee the blisse that thou desirest ofte.

And if so be that thou her name finde
 Written in booke, or elles upon walle,
 Looke that thou, as servaunt true and kinde
 Thine obeisaunce, as she were there withalle ;
 Faining in love is breeding of a falle 2231
 From the grace of her whose lookes softe
 May give the blisse that thou desirest ofte.

Ye that this ballade reade shalle,
 I pray you keep you from the falle.

VIRELAI.

ALONE walkyng,
 In thought pleynyng,
 And sore syghyng,
 Al desolate,

Me remembryng
Of my lyvyng,
My deth wyshyng
 Bothe erly and late.

Inf fortunate
Is soo my fate
That, wote ye whate ?
 Oute of mesure

My lyfe I hate :
Thus desperate,
In suche pore estate,
 Do I endure.

Of other cure
Am I nat sure ;
Thus to endure
 Ys hard certayn :
20

Suche ys my ure,¹
I yow ensure ;
What creature
 May have more payn ?

My trouth so pleyn
Ys take in veyn,
And gret disdeyn
 In remembraunce ;

¹ Fortune

Yet I full feyne
Wolde me compleyne, 30
Me to absteyne
From thys penaunce.

But in substaunce,
Noon allegeaunce¹
Of my grevaunce
Can I nat fynde ;

Ryght so my chaunce,
With displesaunce,
Doth me avaunce ;
And thus an ende. 40

CHAUCER'S PROPHECY.

WHAN prestis faylin in her sawes,
And lordis turnin Goddis lawes
Ageynis ryt ;

And lecherie is holden as privy solas,
And robberie as fre purchas,
Bewar than of ille.

Than schall the lond of Albion
Turnin to confusion,
As sumtyme it befelle.

¹ Alleviation.

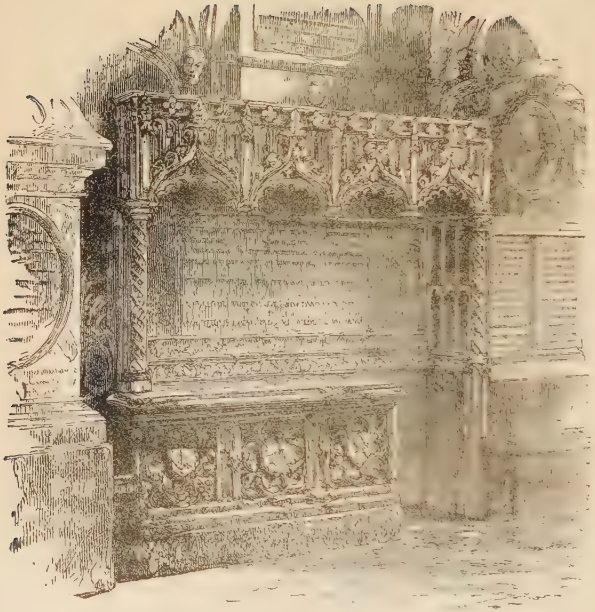
*Ora pro Anglia, Sancta Maria, quod Thomas
Cantuaria.*

Sweete Jhesu, heven-king,
Fayr and beste of all thyng,
You bring us owt of this morning
To come to the at owre ending.

GO FORTH, KING.

Go forth, King, rule thee by sapience ;
Bishop, be able to minister doctrine ;
Lorde, to true counsaile geve audience ;
Womanhode, to chastity ever incline ;
Knight, let thy deedes worship determine :
Be righteous, Judge, in saving of thy name ;
Riche, do almose, lest thou lese bliss with
shame.

People, obey your king and the law ;
Age, be ruled by good religion ;
True Servaunt, be dredful and keep thee under
law ;
And, thou Poore, fie on presumption !
Inobedience to Youth is utter destruction ;
Remember you how God hath set you, lo,
And doe your part as ye be ordained to.



Chaucer's Tomb in Westminster Abbey

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